

/Information on the Tall ceremony as a form of temporary pre-pubescent ritual marriage for the Nayar and Tiyyar girl will be found in category 588./

582 Sororal polygyny and fraternal polyandry, as well
585 as marriage to the dead spouse's sibling, were
835 thus automatically forbidden. This rule appears
to relate to the paramount need to keep minimal
the potential rivalries between individuals of the
same sex within the group. It was also consistent
with the relationship of respect between
• 585 them. Even today, when ceremonies mark the
602 start of the post-puberty marriage, a man's
595 lineage elders may not attend his marriage ceremonies and feast. He goes to the bride's house with unrelated friends of his own age or with affines, ideally, his sister's husbands. For marriage is a jolly undertaking and only such men may joke together about sexual scandals in the village. But [81] reticence is required in discussing their own marriage, and the respect a woman owes her older kinswomen demands that she interfere in no way in their marital life. Today, a woman treats her father or step-father with affectionate respect of a less formal kind than that accorded to the mother's brother, but she should not touch him after puberty. With her elder sister's husband she observes still greater formality, based on the incest prohibition. The ban on sororal polygyny is particularly comprehensible in view of the fact that Nayar women were traditionally open rivals for the attentions of men: many writers mention this and it is still discernible in villages today. The mutual respect and amity required of women of the same property-group was incompatible with such rivalry.

835 However, the ban on relations with two persons
582 of the same group was less stringent than the

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own daughters and grandchildren, but sisters "stood in" for one another in caring for their children and contributed their work in a manner conducive to the general welfare. 593
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Between sisters, especially own sisters, there was deep personal affection as well as loyalty to the sibling group and to the taravād. Sisters were also rivals, often squabbling over jewelry, clothing, and favors. Both rivalry and affection were most intense between sisters close in age. 593
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Most women died in their ancestral homes among their siblings and children. Only a woman whose forebears and brothers were all dead might move away from her sisters into a separate property group headed by her son as kāravan. Even so, sisters often lived to experience covert disputes between their children, who looked forward to the day when they would separate into new branch taravāds. In the last resort sisters would support their own children in quarrels, although they tried not to become involved in such disputes but to preserve their mutual amity. [578]

MARRIAGE

The taravād was obviously of very great strength as an economic and legal corporation. Correspondingly, marriage was the slenderest of ties. 613
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Every ten or twelve years, the immature girls of one generation within a lineage were ritually married on the same day by men drawn from their enangar lineages. Before the ceremony the girls were secluded for three days and caused to observe ritual prohibitions as if they had menstruated. (The actual rite of tying the tāli or gold ornament around the bride's neck is the central rite of "normal" marriage among most of the patrilineal castes of South India.) After the tāli rite, each couple was secluded for three days in a room of the ancestral house. Their seclusion clearly marked a ceremonial if not an actual defloration, and travelers' accounts of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries indicate that the brides were actually deflowered at this time (Stanley, 1865: 24; Kerr, 1811: chap. 6; Hamilton, ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 174). During the seclusion period, rites were performed to the goddess Bhagavadi to enhance the girls' fertility. On the fourth morning each couple took a purifying bath and ate a meal together. In Calicut and Walluvanad, although apparently not in Cochin, each bridegroom then tore in two the lower cloth worn by the girl in the period of seclusion. He kept one half and handed the other to the girl. Their personal obligations ended, the bridegrooms left the household. [842]
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A husband normally visited his wife after eating supper in his natal home, and left before breakfast. Even today in many orthodox Nayar homes men eat regularly in their taravāds and accept food in their wives' homes only on special invitation from their wives' kāranavans. Traditionally a husband placed his weapons outside his wife's door as a sign to other men that he was within. My informants in a Cochin village reported that, within living memory in the late nineteenth century, if two husbands called on the same night the one who came last might sleep outside on the veranda. Usually a woman's regular husbands knew each other and informally agreed upon their turns. 595 [201]

The relationship with the visiting husband was called *sambandham* (Sanskrit, "joining together"). At the start of a girl's first *sambandham* her husband came to her house privately at night, sometimes with a few friends of his own age. In the presence of the girl's kin he presented her with a white cloth of the kind worn as a skirt. The occasion was not marked by feasting. Later husbands might or might not present the cloth. A transient visitor is said to have left a gold coin beneath the woman's pillow, and a regular husband might do the same on the first night of his union. 585 595

While his relationship lasted, a regular husband was expected to make gifts to his wife at the three main festivals of the year. Vishu, in April, was the Malayalam New Year; Onam, in September, was a harvest festival; Tiruvadira, in December, was a women's festival to Kama Devan, the god of passion. The gifts were of bathing oil, bananas, wafer biscuits, and betel leaves and areca nuts for chewing. In some areas a husband also gave a loin cloth of superior quality at Onam. The gifts were prepared by women of the husband's taravād. and he should present them in person to each of his wives on the festival day. If a husband failed to make these gifts it was a tacit sign that he had ended the relationship. It should be noted that the gifts, trivial in value, were gifts of courtship and were in no sense maintenance. Bathing oil is a feminine toilet requisite; wafer biscuits are delicacies served at feasts; and the giving of chewing materials between a man and a woman is everywhere in South India associated with courtship or with the first night of marriage. A husband had no obligation at all to maintain his wife, for she received her food, shelter, and regular clothing from her taravād. 595 431 [796] [776] [613] [586] [302] [262] [276] [584] [585]

The only other obligations of a husband came at the birth of a child. When a woman became pregnant it was necessary for one or more men of appropriate caste to acknowledge possible biological 843 595 431

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594 taravād. A woman might also visit for several weeks each year.
[593] Brother and younger sister, like a man and his sister's daughter, ob-
[604] served rules of partial avoidance—associated with incest prohibitions—
during their periods of co-residence.

591 Sisters were always separated upon marriage, for the Nayars of
582 this area, unlike those to the south, forbade the marriage of two
brothers to two sisters. They say that such marriages would endanger
the unity of the brothers' taravād by introducing into it too strong a
613 contingent from another lineage (Gough, 1952). Sisters were together,
591 however, during childhood in their father's house, and were often
[593] reunited in old age when they went back to the taravād. Although
[763] they might seldom have stayed there during childhood and early
[586] youth, women seem usually to have died in their matrilineal an-
[764] cestral homes. A woman was often widowed in old age. Alternatively
she might elect to leave her husband and return to her taravād and
sons when her period of childbearing was ended. In any case a
woman's body had to be cremated and her funeral rites performed
in the garden of her taravād house.

[431] Women in avunculocal residence were partly maintained by their
husbands' taravāds in return for domestic services. Nevertheless, im-
portant distributive ties persisted between them and their matrilineal
kinsmen. Usually their kāranavan sent quantities of grain and clothing
to them and their children twice annually after the harvests as part
of their maintenance.

MARRIAGE

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[582] Following the tāli rite, a girl entered into a marriage relationship
(sambandham) with one man at about the age of eleven. The father's
sister's son, if of suitable age, was considered the rightful claimant.
[686] If the girl did not marry him her kāranavan must pay a token fine to
him at the marriage ceremony. The giving of the cloth by the
husband which marked the start of a sambandham was carried out
with ceremony in the girl's ancestral house and was the occasion for
a large feast to relatives of both parties. After the marriage had been
consummated in the girl's house the couple were ceremonially con-
ducted to the bridegroom's taravād and the girl was formally received
into it by her husband's mother and his kāranavan's wife.

[684] While a marriage endured the husband had exclusive rights in his
[848] wife's sexuality. If he detected her in adultery he might by custom
kill her lover, cut off the hair of his wife, and send her home after
divorce. A woman was not, however, excommunicated from caste

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and her children were not illegitimate unless she had relations with a man of low caste.

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A woman normally lived with her husband in his ancestral home or in a separate house on his ancestral land. He then owed her physical protection and at least a part of her food and clothing, in return for limited domestic services. Occasionally a man might choose to visit his wife in her ancestral home if she lived nearby. In this case he might work on her ancestral land or bring periodic provisions of grain and clothing to her and her children. He would eat sometimes in his ancestral house and sometimes in the house of his wife. In all marriages a husband was obliged to pay the full expenses of delivery when his wife bore a child in her ancestral home and, additionally, to supply grain and other food to her throughout the six months which she spent in her taravād at this time.

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A woman owed respect and obedience to her husband. He had the right to scold or even to beat her if she disregarded his wishes. Polygyny was permitted and was fairly common among village headmen, chiefs, and royalty. The polygynous husband usually provided separate houses for his wives on his ancestral estate.

Theoretically, either party might divorce the other at will, but in fact it was usually the husband who initiated a divorce. We do not know how common divorce was in the traditional period. At present it is rare in wealthy landowning lineages, although it probably takes place rather more frequently than among aristocratic Mappillas of North Kerala. It is more usual among the poorer Nambiar commoners, although probably less frequent than among the poorer Tiyyars of this area.

Widows might remarry freely by traditional law. Today it is somewhat rare for a widow to remarry if she has children under the age of three or four; we do not know whether this was the case traditionally. A widow who does remarry almost invariably leaves her children by the first marriage behind in her taravād, in the care of her mother or some other older natal kinswomen. Such children may visit their mother in their stepfather's house but they have no customary rights of maintenance there, and it is considered that their own taravād is the correct place for them to live.

Thus in North Kerala, by contrast with Central Kerala, differences of paternity may create structural divisions among the children born of one mother. All are of the same taravād and share the same fundamental birth-status rights, but if their fathers were different they

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* [564] endogamous Attikkurissi clan of the Nâyars, who look upon it as the most fitting union.

MARRIAGE.

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"The haughty nobles and the vulgar race
Never must join the conjugal embrace."

The Lusiad.

[656] The common assertion that there is no such thing as marriage amongst the Nâyars, so easily accepted in belief that the Government has been persuaded into a commission to examine the question and to pass an edict entitled "The Malabar Marriage Bill" (which happily fell dead, and is extremely unlikely to effect the customs of the Nâyars and others following the Marumakkattâyam law of inheritance), reminds one of the weary disquisition by people who are dull enough to try and prove that Shakespeare's plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another fellow of the same name. No events of life being so realistic to man as marriage and death (to the individual, to the tribe, to the people) shallowness rather than sturdy hardihood of racial character is perhaps indicated when we find any downright change in the ceremonial of marriage, even though it be but some ephemeral divagation and not properly speaking radical change.

175 Buchanan, writing in 1800, tells us that Nâyar girls are married before 10, so that they may not be deflowered

585 by nature, but the husband never afterwards cohabits
[582] with his wife. It would not be decent. He allows her this and that, and she lives in her mother's house where
[837] she may admit a lover of her own or of a higher caste; the lover giving her a small present; never a large one, which would indicate that she was influenced by mercenary motives.

237 He says the young people vie with each other for favour of the other sex, but that, should a Nâyar

175 man have intimacy with a Tiyan (a lower caste) woman,
564 he is put to death and the woman is sold to the Mâppilas. In the case of the *chère amie* being a slave—presumably of the Cheruman or cognate tribes—both are put to death.

[626] If this be true, there were forcible means used in those days for preventing intermixture of the people of the higher and lower castes. Buchanan tells us also that in North Malabar, where as a rule the lady lives in his home, the Nâyar or Nambûtiri lover may put her to death, should she be guilty of infidelity; and he may send her home whenever he pleases.

The times have changed things a little: a little only 178
because after all the change is on the surface: it is not
radical. Now-a-days, when there is a penal code to deal 1671
with persons who kill others, the Nayar cannot keep a 595
concubine of a caste (not a clan) lower than his own 564
without fear of social ex-communication. The killing, 575
except perhaps now and then *sub rosa*, is a thing of the
past.

The custom which permits the woman to cohabit with 582
a man, her equal or superior in caste, has been alluded to
more than once. I will now make some use of the 561
(Government) Report of the Malabar Marriage Commis- 127
sion, published in 1894, which contains much information
which is extremely valuable to the anthropologist and
the folklorist, and none the worse for being found
together with views and opinions with which he cannot
agree. One of the points to which the Commission
directed special attention was "as to the customs
connected with Hindu marriages in Malabar" and the
evidence collected respecting these may be accepted as
correct, and the delineation of existing custom may be
taken as authoritative. Now the custom which permits
the man to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale
than himself prohibits the woman from exercising the
same liberty. "This is called the rule of *Anulómam* and
Pratilómam. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulómam* from *anu* =
with + *lómam* = *rómam* = the hair: going with the hair or
grain. So *Pratilómam* means "going against the hair or
grain." According to this usage a Nayar woman, con-
sorting with a man of a higher caste follows the hair,
purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social
estimation. By cohabitation with a man of a lower
division (clan) or caste, she is guilty of *Pratilómam*; and,
if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she
would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole
family being boycotted."

A corollary of this custom is that a Nambútiri 783
Bráhmaṇ father cannot touch his own children by his
Nayar consort without bathing afterwards to remove the
pollution. The children in the Marumakkattāyam family 251
belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, caste.
They are Nayars, not Nambútiris; so the Nambútiri
cannot touch them without pollution.

The rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam* appears to be 184
observed with the utmost strictness and thoroughness;
one finds it obtaining between members of the same clan
inhabiting different parts of the country. Mention of this

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837 should be no such thing as chastity excepting amongst the Brāhman women. And the Kolatūr Vāriyār, a great personage: "A woman is not forbidden from consorting with more than one man. For the Marumakkatāyam people, who reckon their descent in the female line, there is no objection to any cohabitation which does not contaminate the female element."

581 The opinions which have been quoted are those of persons of the highest position, principals of the oldest families, and give expression to the old-fashioned Malabar custom which they would be the last to condemn. But it must not be imagined that the goddess Lubricity reigns supreme in Malabar. It seems perhaps to have been indicated that she does. Such is, however, not the case. It has been said by one whose long acquaintance with Malabar gives him what we may call admitted right to express authoritative opinion, that, "nowhere else is the marriage tie more jealously guarded, and its breaches more savagely avenged." We shall know more of the subject presently, when we have done with all that pertains to formal union between the sexes. As a matter of fact lubricity has no more followers in Malabar than elsewhere.

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182 The ceremonies surrounding marriage and death seem to be those in which human feelings are deepest, and consequently in these, more than in any others, we see relics of a long gone past; much of the ceremonial being now apparently meaningless, and handed on after the manner of all ceremonial, for no obvious purpose, long after the original signification has been forgotten. Amongst all races of the world it is the same. These form perhaps—for the ceremonies connected with death are interwoven with primitive religious ideas—the closest links between our earlier ancestors and ourselves. The institution marriage itself is not easily liable to change or even modification, and thus it is, perhaps, that it, the product of a bygone age, is not always suited to the wants of the age in which it is found. It is rarely up to date. It is invariably blended with superstitions and restraints which people believe they believe; and the relations between the sexes are rarely natural, *i.e.*, rarely free from restraints which are souvenirs of the past, and which are resented in the present. Of course amongst primitive peoples changes in respect of marital connexions, as also in respect of death ceremonies, are imperceptible. They must be very small indeed in even an immense period; and in their case there is not that

unsuitability to the time in which they exist, which is 585
apparent amongst those societies more liable to change. 764

But whatever the reasons may be, the relations 182
between the sexes in Malabar are unusually happy.
They seem to be more than commonly natural. 593
The most obvious reason for their being so is that they are 421
less influenced by considerations of property than else-
where. The desire to maintain property within the
family is the curse of all natural relations between the
sexes. What strange customs has it not put upon
mankind! We have some strange examples of these in
Southern India, as when a woman is married to the door-
post of the house, and the house owner begets children
on her to inherit his property; or when a man marries
his child to a woman, and himself begets children on
her, and the individual who stands in the position of
father may be but a few years older than the son. But
we need not look farther than Europe for anomalous
customs which inhibit the working of the law of natural
selection. Malabar is fairly free from unfortunate
customs, and it is perfectly fair to say the marital
relation amongst the Nâyars is more than commonly
natural.

A description of the ceremonies and formalities 588
connected with the marital connexion will now be 121
attempted. The first of these, described as "most
peculiar, distinctive, and unique," is the Tâli-kettu-
kalyânam. The details of this ceremony vary in
different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony itself, in
some form, is essential, and must be performed for every
Nâyar girl before she attains puberty. Tâli-kettu-
kalyânam means marriage by tying the tâli, or ceremony
of tying the tâli, a small golden ornament, worn on the
neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravi-
dian peoples.

The following account was given by M.R.Ry. 564
K. R. Krishna Menon, retired Sub-Judge, to the Com- 613
mission:—

"The Tâli-kettu-kalyânam is somewhat analogous to what a 588
Dévadâsi (dancing girl attached to pagodas) of other countries
undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal
families, and those of certain Edaprabhûs, a Kshatriya,—and
among the Chârna sect, a Nedungâdi,—is invited to the girl's
house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and in
the presence of friends and castemen ties tâli round her neck,
and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble.
Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined 787

564 of cohabitation; and on the fourth day the bridegroom
613 severs his connection with the girl, symbolising divorce
588 by cutting into two pieces the cloth (called kachai cloth)
[184] which she wears. The tearing of the cloth is, however,
[586] confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of
[765] the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the
[783] divorce, the girl observes death-pollution when her
Manavâlan dies. The same Manavâlan may tie the tâli
on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at
any other time; and he may be old or young. He is
often an elderly holy Brâhman, who receives a small
present for his services. The ceremony is always the
occasion of feasting and jollification. The girl may
remove the tâli if she likes after the fourth day.

588 In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the
man who performs the rôle of Manavâlan is considered
to have some right to the girl, but in such a case it has
been already considered that he is a proper man to enter
into Sambandham with her. It will be as well to remark
here that almost invariably amongst the inferior races,
the aboriginals so to speak of Malabar, girls are married
[833] (their marriage is consummated) before puberty. The
fuss that was made a few years ago (by the shrieking
sisterhood) about the age of consent has had no effect
there.

613 The tâli-tying ceremony having been performed while
• 585 the girl is yet a child, the next step in the matter of
[588] her alliance with a man is the arrangement of the
Sambandham. As the rule nothing more than the con-
sent of the girl and of her guardian, the Kâranavan of
the family, is necessary. There is no religious formality.
The tâli-tying ceremony dispenses with everything of the
kind. There is, however, in some parts a tendency now-
a-days "to surround the occasion of first cohabitation
with a more or less elaborate ceremonial." It is quite an
informal affair, arranged by the Kâranavans of the two
families. Many a time a young fellow of 22 or 24,
answering my question whether he had contracted
Sambandham with any one, replied that the head of his
family had not yet arranged a Sambandham for him.
The wishes of the contracting parties—for in great
measure it is a contract—and of the heads of the families
practically settle the matter. Should the parties find
they are unsuited, they part. There is no dragging on
under a bondage intolerable to both.

585 The following account was given by Mr. Chandu
184 Menon (a Nayar) to the Commission. He says:—

"The variations of the Sambandham are the Pudamuri, ⁵⁸⁵ ¹⁸⁴ Vastradānam, Uzhamporukkuka, Vītāram Kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malayali who would not readily understand what is meant by *Sambandham tudan guga* (to begin Sambandham). The meaning of this phrase which means "to marry" is understood throughout Kéralam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it.

"It is thus found that Sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among Marumakkattayam Nāyars. It will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this Sambandham ceremony, all over the Kéralam, are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically: the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony: the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place: the presentation of the *danam* (gifts) to the Brahmans: the sumptuous banquet: the meeting of the bride and the bridegroom,—are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted Sambandhams in all parts of Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to, are gone through at all Sambandhams among respectable Nāyars, and I would further say that they ought to be gone through at every Sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the Sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of Sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the Putamuri, or Vastradānam, as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of Sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of Sambandham I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. Of course my description will be borne out by the evidence that is before us. The preliminary ceremony, ⁵⁸⁵ in every Putamuri, is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place ⁷⁸⁷ in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes ⁸⁴ down the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes

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184 agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of [787] cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's Kāranavan, and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and [574] the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth; and this preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all Putamuris in North Malabar, is called 'Putamuri Kurikkal,' but is unknown in South Malabar.

"Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the Putamuri, the bridegroom visits his Kāranavans and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The [584] bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and [613] nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the [564] day appointed the bridegroom proceeds, after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends to seats [481] provided in the tekkini, or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (*danam*) or money gifts to the [576] Brahmans assembled. After this the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to [587] appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *padinhatta* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house, called *padinhatta*, in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and *Ashtamangaliam*, which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangaliam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of the cocoanut tree, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round wooden box called 'cheppu' made in a particular fashion. These will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groom's-man enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloth and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the *Ashtamangaliam* and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groom's-man then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride, sprinkles rice over

the lit-up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and the bridegroom, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkinī or southern hall he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. 585
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"This is an unvarnished account of a 'Putamuri.' Next morning the Vettillakkettu or Salkāram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is a feasting, etc., in honour of the occasion.

"Uzhamporukkuka, or Vidāram Kayaral is a peculiar form of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the description given above, that the Putamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people generally resort to the less costly ceremony of Uzhamporukkuka or Vidāram Kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as Putamuri; but it is celebrated on a smaller scale. There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The toasting is confined to the relations of the married couple. The particular incident attached to this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular Putamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by Uzhamporukkuka, or Vidāram Kayaral ceremony, and with grown-up children being the issue of such marriage, undergoing the Putamuri ceremony some 15 or 20 years after Uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally.

"The Sambandham of South Malabar, and the Kidakkorakalyānam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of Putamuri, except the presenting of the cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also Salkāram ceremony, wanting in South Malabar as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

But all this formality and ceremonial is not the rule. The Sambandham is always a matter for careful arrangement, in which the wishes of the parties to it are considered, and which it is expected will bring mutual benefit to the two Taravāds concerned.

In South Malabar the girl or woman never lives in her husband's house; she lives on in her own Taravād house and is there visited by her husband. The ordinary huggermugger, which sometimes stultifies all pleasure in existence, is thus avoided. In North Malabar the woman 591
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lives in the house with her husband. A point to be noted in this connection is that, when her husband dies, she must leave his house and return to her own at once, before his body is carried out. According to the Kêrâla Mâhâtmyam the women in North Malabar (should) live with but one man at a time.

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We still, after the manner of children, confound words with things, so it is not surprising that the unfortunate Commission arrived at the conclusion that the institution of marriage was and is entirely absent from the Marumakkattâyam system. "The parties do not plight troth, and do not call God to witness their union." And so forth. But with this conclusion suitable enough to the high-flown moralist or to the restless beings who would regardlessly sweep away the long results of time and improve on the process of natural development, imposing fanciful arrangements of their own, the anthropologist cannot at all agree. The Sambandham, a regularly formed, and certainly not haphazard alliance between a man and a woman, having the full sanction of the community, is marriage in every sense of the word. If the tali-tying ceremony gave the girl free liberty, we might well suspect that the Sambandham followed a ceremony, not a marriage ceremony. But such is by no means the case, for, should the woman who is unmarried, for whom Sambandham has not been arranged, or whose husband, the man with whom she had had Sambandham, is dead—there is no such thing as widowhood,—bear a child, she is disgraced, much as is the Brâhman widow under the same circumstances.

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What then is the meaning of the assertions of the exponents of the orthodox view that the woman need not be chaste; and so on? The question is not an easy one to answer, but I think we may say with confidence that this orthodox view has been, in some measure, propounded by the Nambûtiris for their own gratification. I have myself known several tragedies arising out of unfaithfulness, and I believe the old fashioned code of custom admitted the right of the husband to kill his wife's lover if he could, and also to kill his wife. No doubt in a great many cases the pair bound together in Sambandham lead lives ordinarily chaste. I do not, however, think that in actuality such is the rule with either party any more than it is in any other community, and sexual affairs are often treated lightly. With taste and consideration too, Hamilton, who arrived at Calicut in 1702, and spent some twenty odd years on the coast,

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writes thus in speaking of the Nâyars:—"When the man visits the woman he lays down his arms at the door; but, if there are no arms at the door, any acquaintance may visit her. To visit the house when there are arms at the door, or remove them, is death." Now-a-days a man leaves his shoes outside the door. Equality of the sexes in all sexual matters, the man and woman being on terms of equality, having equal freedom, is certainly an uncommon merit in the Marumakkattâyam system. Either party may terminate the union—even after one night of hymeneal bliss; and those who are unsuited to each other sexually, or in the way of temperament, in fact in any way, may put an end to their union and turn towards other partners. It may be thought that this liberty induced perpetual change, so it is as well to state here that it does nothing of the kind. Mere arbitrary divorce is very rare. Permanent attachment is the rule. The basis of the system seems to be that the Taravâd estate is held in trust for the support of the females and of their descendants in the female line. This trust is placed in the hands of the Kâranavan, the senior male member of the Taravâd who is the legal guardian of every member of it, and whose control of the Taravâd property is absolute. The odd feature in the Marumakkattâyam system is that a man has his nephews about him in the house, and not his sons. He lives in one house, while his wife and family live in another. That is, in South Malabar; in North Malabar they live together.

When we come to consider the degrees of relationship within which marriage is prohibited, we find the rule is that persons descended from a common female ancestor are not at liberty to marry. Those of the same Taravâd can never intermarry; but this prohibition does not of course extend to the children of a brother and a sister, who are naturally of different Taravâds. Again, the principle that "no member of the Taravâd of a deceased wife or husband (is) eligible as the second wife or husband is true only as far as the woman is concerned; for a man may marry a woman of his deceased wife's Taravâd. But he who does this is not in harmony with social sentiment." We find this observance amongst the forest Mûppans of Wynâd. In the case of a man's wife dying, I found that a Mûppan could not take another wife from her family.

The rule does not interfere with union between the children (or their descendants) of a brother and sister

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613 such children belonging of course, under the Marumak-
[171] kattâyam system, to different Taravâds. We have seen
already, when speaking of the Nambûtiris, that this rule
of marriage between the children of a brother and sister,
never between the children of two brothers or two sisters,
is general throughout Southern India. It seems to be
common, though there are exceptions, to the Brâhmans
and the peoples commonly called Dravidian, with most
of whom it is the most fitting marital union.

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553 It will be interesting to add here a note on Samban-
dham as it is amongst the Akattu Chârna, or Akathitha-
parisha Nâyars (Akattu inside, parisha class),* by one of
585 themselves. The members of this clan being devoted to
indoor services, chiefly writing and casting accounts.
To those of the sub-clan attached to the Zamorin who
were sufficiently capable to earn it, he gave the titular
honour "Mênôn," to be used as an affix to the name.
The title Mênôn is in general hereditary, but, be it
remarked, many who now use it are not entitled to do so.
Properly speaking only those whose investiture by the
Zamorin or some other recognized chief is undisputed,
they or their descendants (in the female line of course),
may use it. Those invested pay a small fee to the
Zamorin. A man known to me was invested with the
title Mênôn in 1895 by the Karimpuzha chief, who in
presence of a large assembly said thrice "From this
day forward I confer on Krishnan Nâyâr the title of
Krishna Mênôn." Now-a-days be it said, the title Mênôn
is used by Nâyars of clans other than the Akattu Chârna.
Those who belong to the sub-clan who owe Lordship to
the Zamorin look to him even now to settle their caste
disputes, and for permission to perform the tâlikettu
and other important ceremonies. The ceremony to be
described is that of this sub-clan.

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585 As the old order changeth giving place to new in the
distribution of the honourable affix "Mênôn," so too doth
it change even in such an important piece of life as
178 marriage, or what under another name means the same
thing amongst the Nâyars. It is truly sad to read of
celebration of a Sambandham ceremony at Calicut
whereat there was cake and wine for the guests, and
(shades of all the departed!) a ring for the bride. The
departure from national and therefore rational custom,
for adoption of that which is neither custom nor cere-

* For this note I am indebted to Mr. C. P. Raman Menon, B.A., a
prominent Police official of Calicut

monial when copied meaninglessly, is surely food for painful reflection. 564
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The ceremony to be described is not one of cake and wine, for the doings of people who have reached that bathos have little interest to the anthropologist, though they may have some to the *observer* of social diversions, but the genuine ceremony as done in orthodox fashion in South Malabar without modern adornment will now be described. My informant says in the first place (582) the man should not enter into Sambandham with a woman until he is 30. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar, which is much more conservative than the south, it was, however, my experience that Sambandham was rare before 27 on the side of the man. And now continue with the Note.* "The Kāra-navan and the women † of his household choose the bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and if they agree, the astrologer is sent for and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the Sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and when on the point of leaving they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have Sambandham with—(naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony, the proposal is accepted with pleasure and the party (from the bridegroom's house) returns home." 585
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Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom (for elders never accompany him) are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M. and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the Taravād), (574)

* Of which what follows is an abstract.

† My correspondent uses the word "Ladies." I prefer women, a finer word.

• 585 arecanuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the
564 bride's house is far away the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at
613 the bride's house they sit a while and are again served with food, after which they are conducted to a room where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on brass or silver plates (called thālam). The chewing over, sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal chamber, where the women of the house and others are assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness, hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom and his party go through more chewing while they chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw, wishing the couple all happiness; and then the women, departing one by one leave the couple alone, one of them shutting the door from the outside.

[42] "The Patter Brāhmans always collect on these occasions and receive small presents (dakshina) of 2 to 4 annas each, with betel leaf and areca nut from the bridegroom, sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited receive their dakshina in the bridal chamber; the others outside. [In a Nāyar house the sleeping rooms of the men and women are separate; at different ends of the house.] Those of the bridegroom's party who live far away are given sleeping accommodation at the bride's house, with the men. About daybreak next morning the bridegroom leaves the house with his party, leaving under his pillow Rs. 8, 16, 32 or 64, according to his means but never more than 64, which are intended to cover the expenses of the wife's household on the ceremony. The Sambandham is now complete. The girl remains in her own Taravād house, and her husband visits her there, coming in the evening and leaving the next morning. A few days after completion of the ceremony the senior woman of the bridegroom's house sends some cloths, including pavu mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu mundu (towels) and some oil to the bride for her use for six months. Every six months she does the same, and on festivals of the Ōnam, Vishu; Thiruvathira she sends besides a little money, areca nut, betel nut and tobacco. The money sent should amount to Rs. 4, or 8, or 16, or 32, or 64; either one of these sums. Sums of the higher numbers are very rarely sent.

"Before long the women of the husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the

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astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of the girl-wife, the Ammâyi as they call her (literally "uncle's wife"). They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with them. As she is about to enter the gate house of her husband's Taravâd, the stile of which she crosses right leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a burning lamp and a brass plate (tâlam) and precede her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a mat, and a burning lamp and a nazhi (1 measure) of rice and some plantains are placed before her. One of the younger women [married or not I cannot say] takes up a plantain and puts a piece of it in the Ammâyi's mouth; a little ceremony called Madhuram Tital, or giving the sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for a few days and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, gifts of the senior women of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. 602
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"In a big Taravâd, where there are many women, the Ammâyi does not, as a rule, disperse sympathy and good will in the household, and if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes though very rarely the case in south Malabar, and to be the wife of the Kâranavan, it is observed that she gets, more than her share of whatever good things may be going; hence the proverb 'Ammâyi Ammayê Kallin-mel Vechchittu Mattoru Kallu Kondu Nârâyana'—'Place Ammâyi Amma on a stone and grind her with another stone.'" [539]

Yet one more extract—a reference taken from my notes. The Rev. S. Mateer, author of a well-known book on Travancore, where he resided something over a quarter of a century I think, informed me ten years ago—he was speaking of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Travancore—that he had "known an instance of 6 brothers keeping 2 women, 4 husbands to one, and 2 to the other. In a case where 2 brothers cohabited with one woman and one was converted to Christianity, the other brother was indignant at the Christian's refusal to live any longer in this condition." I have not known an admitted instance of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Malabar at the present day, but there is no doubt that if it does not exist now (and I think it does here and there), 595

Nayar

FEMALE INITIATION RITES ON THE MALABAR COAST

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with any Nambūdiri Brahman who had the consent of her *kāṇṇassas*. Until recently, polyandry and divorce were said by my Nayar informants to have been even commoner than among Nayars.

In the Zamorin's and the Walluvanād lineages the *tdli* was tied by princes of the more ancient royal lineages of Kodungalur and Beypore. Actual defloration does not seem to have been obligatory in recent times. Kerr's (1811, ch 6) translation of Castaneda, however, states that

... these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nayar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel around her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives.

Of the Zamorin's own marriage to a Nayar wife, Hamilton (1727, p. 172), a Scottish trader, wrote in 1723:

When the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambourie or chief Priest has enjoyed her, and, if he pleases, may have Three Nights of her Company, because the first Fruits of her nuptials must be an holy Oblation to the God she worships; and some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the Clergy the same Tribute; but the common people cannot have that Compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the Priest's place themselves.

Barbosa (Stanley, 1866, p. 124), writing in a more robust age, 1510, says of the Nayar commoners: 'And from that time forward [i.e. after the *tdli*-rite] the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women.'

The immediate significance of the *tdli*-rite for Nayars of this area, taken in conjunction with their combined polyandry and polygyny, is clear. A Nayar *taravd* is perpetuated by its women. Hence the extraordinary value set by Nayars on obtaining a sufficiency of husbands and thus of children for their lineage. The *tdli*-rite dramatizes this need of the lineage for male sexual partners who ('like breeding bulls', as a Calicut prince remarked) will fulfil the one role denied to men of the lineage in respect of their sisters and nieces. The bridegroom's role as *enangan* was significant in a caste community in which sex relations were promiscuous. In this rite, through a chosen representative, the local caste group as a whole 'married' the lineage as a whole, and ritually set free the procreative powers of its girls to perpetuate their lineage. The ritual 'divorce' on the fourth day freed the girls from their particular bridegrooms, as the fee which accompanied it freed their lineage from further obligations to these men. If he wished to perpetuate the relationship, the ritual bridegroom must come again in a different role, without prior claims, merely as one of a series of lovers. The 'divorce' foreshadows the jealousy with which Nayar men regard the post-puberty lovers of their sisters: these are prevented from interfering in household matters, and may be dismissed by the brothers in a momentary fit of pique. The separation of the *tdli*-rite (the ritual marriage) from the later *sambandham* unions (initiated without rites) thus underlines the necessity to the lineage of husbands and fathers, while denying to the individual husband and father a legally and socially significant role in relation to his wife and children.

The tying of the *tdli*, in aristocratic lineages, by a Nambūdiri Brahman or other personage of higher caste in place of an *enangan*, fits in with the custom of hypergamous marriage. The higher caste bridegroom's role gives ceremonial recognition to the overlordship of *addu-paris* over *desavaris*, of kings over *adduvaris*, and in religious matters, of Nambūdiri Brahmins over all. The higher caste lover had no more rights in his mistress than the Nayar and even fewer obligations to her. At the same time the function in the political and economic systems of these high caste men's roles as ritual and physiological husbands and fathers to members of the castes below them must not be underestimated. Today the old political system has

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addition to maintaining his wife he is expected but not strictly obliged to maintain his children till puberty, though both wife and children may claim maintenance from their lineage as well. Paternal kin are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five generations. Marriage is prohibited between the children of brothers. The *enagar* relationship formerly existed between lineages of the same local group: individual *enagar* represented the group to the lineage at funerals and kept watch over its observance of caste laws. In most rites, however, patrilineal kin and affines filled the roles filled by *enagar* in South Malabar.

The post-puberty *sambandham* is initiated with ceremonies and feasting, the central rite being the handing of a loin-cloth by the man to the woman in the presence of his age-mates and her kin. After consummation in the bride's house, the couple go to the husband's house where they are ceremonially received by elders. Children must be born in the mother's ancestral house, but paternal kin assert their claims in rites shortly after the birth. Physiological paternity is, of course, seldom in doubt, and sibling-groups refer to themselves proudly as 'the children of such-and-such' [their father's] lineage', for whose members they commonly exhibit greater affection, though less loyalty, than they do for matrilineal kinsmen.

The *Nayar Tali-Rite*. Though the North Malabar *sambandham* was a 'real' marriage, the pre-puberty *tali* rite was conducted as in the south. Unfortunately, I lack details of this rite either from the literature or from informants. Among Nambiaris of Kottayam the ceremonies lasted four days and were conducted in a marriage shed, the areca-palm corner-post and the branch of the milk-tree being planted ceremonially as in the south. A temple-servant woman drew a chalk pattern to represent Bhagavadi and made offerings of rice, paddy, and coconuts before it. Before the *tali* was tied on the first day, men of the temple drummers' caste of Marars,¹ who here rank below Nayars and at their funerals direct offerings to the spirit, placed gold bangles on the upper arms of the 'brides' and addressed them for the first time as *amma* ('mother', or 'married lady'). After the rite, the Marars received the bangles as payment. At a sign from the astrologer, a Nambūdiri Brahman tied the *tali* for each girl. The couples were secluded for three days and the 'marriage' ended with a ceremonial bath on the fourth day. Unless (as was rare in this area) the Nambūdiri wished to visit the girl as her regular husband after puberty, he might not cohabit with her again. The *tali*-tier was not called *appan* by the children, nor was he regarded as their ritual father. Children even traditionally observed death pollution not for this ritual bridegroom of the mother but for the *genitor*, at whose funeral rites they played a part only second in importance to the deceased's younger brothers and sisters' children. Informants did not think that the 'bride' observed pollution for her *tali*-tier's death; she did, however, traditionally observe pollution for her *sambandham* husband unless divorced before his death.

In Samantan Nambiar *nāduvari* lineages, as among Nambiaris, the *tali* was tied by a Nambūdiri. *Sambandham* unions sometimes took place between *nāduvari* lineages of equal rank; more commonly, as in the south, *nāduvari* men married Nambiar women and Samantan Nambiar women married royal or Nambūdiri men. In the ancient Kshattriya lineages of Kottayam and Kurumbranad the *tali* was tied by a Nambūdiri, and women of these lineages later had Nambūdiris as husbands, the princes marrying 'down' with women of chiefly or village headmen's lineages. The Kolattiri lineage, which is less ancient and not acknowledged to be 'truly' Kshattriya, is said to have been a branch of the Travancore royal lineage which moved its site long ago. Kolattiri women had the *tali* tied by men of a caste called Koil Tambarans, ancient Kshattriya families of Travancore who had been conquered by the Travancore Maharajas, and some of whom were brought to North Malabar by the Kolattiri

¹In South Malabar Marars are a temple-servant caste of drummers ranking slightly above Nayars. Nayar funeral rites are conducted by the lower Nayar sub-caste of Attikuram (Chaligans to Cochín). In North Malabar, Marars rank below Nayars, and conduct Nayar funeral rites, there being no separate subclass of funeral priests in the north.

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Tiyyar

[North Malabar]

POLYANDRY ^{FEMALE INITIATION RITES ON THE MALABAR COAST} 37

polygyny more common than among Nayers. Symmetrical cross-cousin marriage is encouraged, the mother's brother's son being the rightful husband of a girl. Divorce, however, appears to be much more common than among Nayers and the domestic group less stable, especially in poor families.

For the post-puberty marriage ceremony the bridegroom comes with his parents and elders to the house of the bride. This contrasts with Nayar marriage, where the youth is accompanied by age-mates, the father and maternal uncles being prohibited from attending. This difference reflects the fact that despite virilocal residence and the comparative infrequency of divorce, North Malabar Nayar marriage is theoretically, as in the south, a contract between individuals as sexual partners and not between lineages. Moreover, the absence of the maternal uncles reflects the sexual jealousy between proximal generations in a Nayar lineage. Among Tiyyars, marriage is primarily a contract between families, a domestic arrangement for procuring food and bringing up children, as well as a sexual tie. The bridegroom's father and *kdranavan* jointly give gold to the goldsmith who makes earrings for the bride and places them in the tops of her ears. These rings are the mark of a married woman and are removed at divorce or death.

The feast at the bride's house is paid for jointly by the two parties. After it is over, the bridegroom's *kdranavan* pays a bride-price in *panams* (old-fashioned Malayali coins) to the *kdranavan* of the bride. This sum is called *kdnam*, the word used for the sum paid by a Nayar or Tiyyar tenant to his landlord at the start of a period of tenure, nowadays fixed at twelve years. The interest on the *kdnam* sum is then set off against the annual rent, and returned to the tenant if the property is returned at the end of the stipulated period. The Tiyyar marriage is thus, as Aiyappan (1944, p. 91) says, 'in theory a temporary depositing of a girl by her natural guardian amidst another group from whom a security is received and also an undertaking to take care of her'. The bride's party in return pay a dowry of jewellery and vessels. The bridegroom presents one loin-cloth to the bride and another to her mother. The couple are blessed by elders and depart to the bridegroom's house.

The Tiyyar marriage, therefore, is better defined legally than the Nayar. The *kdnam* sum (which is of nominal value, in Kottayam fixed at 13½ *panams* or 3 to 5 rupees¹ and paid in the old coins long after their use as currency died out) is, it seems, a symbolic purchase of the husband's *ius in uxorem*. While this persists, he must maintain his wife. Should he lose it by the wife's adultery, his *kdnam* sum is returned and his wife goes home with her dowry. In theory, he does not acquire *ius in genitricem* in his wife: this, as in all matrilineal societies, remains with her natal kin. Similarly, the father need not by law maintain his children, though he often does so in fact. These may at any time be returned to their *kdranavan*.

The Tiyyar Tali-Rite. Since the Tiyyar Tali-rite died out about twenty years ago, it has been better described in previous literature than by my own informants. I therefore summarize Anantha Krishna Iyer's (1909-12, I, p. 288), Thurston & Rangachari's (1909, VII, pp. 77-9) and Aiyappan's (1944, pp. 150-62) accounts, and then add that of my informants.

The rite must be performed before puberty, on pain of disgrace to the girl's family, and, in ancient times, excommunication from caste. The day was fixed by the astrologer and the ceremony held in the girl's matrilineal ancestral house. The girl was taken to the middle room of the house and secluded for three days as if she had menstruated. Like a menstruous woman, she must abstain from meat and condiments and must not see a tree, a plant, a man, a crow, a dog, or a cat. On the fourth day she bathed in the local pool. At the pool, her brother planted an arrow with its point up, to drive away evil spirits. After bathing, the girl cut a

¹Thurston & Rangachari report that the north Malabar *kdnam* sum is 41 *panams*; Aiyappan, however, places it between 11 and 29 *panams*. In Kottayam the bridegroom's mother's brother gives 11½ *panams* to the bride's mother's brother and 5 *panams* to her mother's brother's wife.

Tiyyar

[South Malabar and Cochin]

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E. KATHLEEN GOUGH

613 must be unrelated: if a man married an *enagar* woman, the *enagar* bond was broken and each lineage must find new, unrelated *enagar*. *Enagar* must be present to witness marriages, to help at funerals, and to represent their lineage's ancestral spirits in the ceremonial food-offerings to spirits on the sixteenth day after, or the anniversary of, a death. The prohibition on marriages between *enagar* acts as an insurance that the *enagar* should not be prejudiced by ties of matrilineal or affinal kinship in their task of bringing to justice members of the linked lineage who offended against caste law. Among Nayars, this was less likely to happen because patrilineal ties were less strong than are matrilineal ties among Tiyyars.

614 Cutting across their lineage-grouping, the Tiyyars had dispersed, exogamous matrilineal clans, comparable with the clans of the north. My informants knew nothing about these clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do not remember their clan-names. Though the clans have died out, marriage is prohibited between known matrilineal kin.

582 The Tiyyars of this area had fraternal polyandry. In this they must be distinguished from the Nayars, since the Tiyyars banned non-fraternal polyandry, while the Nayars of Malabar and Cochin forbade the marriage of one woman to two men of the same lineage, not to mention the same sibling-group. Tiyyar fraternal polyandry died out about twenty years ago. To carry out this marriage, the horoscopes of the girl and the eldest potential husband were compared and the amount of the dowry of jewels and vessels fixed. The bridegrooms went to the girl's house with their kin and *enagar*. Their mother's brother handed clothing for the bride, together with the *Adnam* sum as in Norther Malabar, to the mother's brother of the bride. A learned man sang a marriage formula to the effect that the girl of such a lineage was here given to the men of such a lineage, with caste-men and the sacred lamp as witness. He adjured the bridegroom's party to punish her reasonably when necessary, but to 'Keep her well, but if you are displeased with her, bring her back to us even if she has ten children, and we shall have her back, after settling the accounts in the presence of the third man [the go-between in marriage arrangements] and the *enangan*.' The bride was seated in the marriage hall at the end of a row beside her bridegrooms. The bridegroom's mother and other kinsfolk, and finally their *enangan* and his wife, fed the grooms and then the bride with porridge and with coconut-milk.

[533] The marriage was consummated shortly afterwards in the bride's house, where each husband in order of age went to live with her for one or two weeks. At the end of the honeymoon period she was brought permanently to the husband's house, where she became her mother-in-law's subordinate. The husbands cohabited with her for equal periods in turn by the arrangement of their mother. Even a child might be married to the common wife by the milk-tie, and when he grew up claim conjugal rights in his much older wife. If the family were large and the wife weak in health, a second and even a third woman might, at least in modern times, be married by all the brothers and shared as their common wife. Children called all the fathers *appan*, prefacing distinguishing terms. Sons had equal rights of inheritance. The system mitigated against division of property, but, at least in modern times, if the family became large, brothers might, on the death of their fathers, divide the property and the children and each take one of the wives to live with him in middle life.

586 Divorce is permitted: a divorced wife returns to her brother's house, whence she may in theory be remarried. To effect a divorce, the eldest husband traditionally took a piece of thread from his loin-cloth, burnt it in two, and blew the two pieces away, saying to the brother of the girl, 'Here is your sister's *achdram*.' *Achdram* commonly means 'custom', and Aiyappan (1944, p. 184), interprets the phrase, 'Hereby the "thread-tie" [formed by presenting a loin-cloth to the wife at marriage] is snapped, and with it my customary rights over this woman as her husband terminate.' The earnest money was returned to the husband's kin in the

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is strong or (as we should expect) permits divorce and return to the brother's household; whether her natal kinsmen retain strong rights in a woman throughout her life; and whether the virgin is in any way associated in myth with a phallic mother-goddess.¹

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¹ The male fear of deflowering a virgin, who may be unconsciously associated with the mother and is thus thought of as the rightful property of a father-figure or of an infant son-figure, appears in the marriage customs of several other South Indian peoples. The patrilineal Tamil Non-Brahmans of Tanjore, who have post-puberty marriage, formerly required the brahman priest who performed their marriage rites to deflower the girl as well. The fact that in these cases the mother's brother is considered the rightful husband of a girl gives further evidence of the belief that a girl should rightly be married by a man of the parental generation. Thurston (1906, pp. 49-50) reports that in the Malayali hill-tribe of Salem (also Tamil) a small boy is married to a mature woman, but the bride's father-in-law and not the husband cohabits with her and begets children on behalf of his son. When the son reaches maturity and his own legal sons are married, he in turn cohabits with their wives and raises children on behalf of his 'sons'. The Vellalas of Coimbatore are said to have a similar custom, in which a boy marries a mature woman, with whom the girl's father-in-law cohabits until the boy is adult. Similarly among the Reddis of Tinnevely, a boy of five is reported often to be married to a girl of twenty. The girl after marriage cohabits with one of her own kinsmen on the maternal side, frequently her mother's brother, or else with the father of her boy-husband. When the husband grows up, he may in some cases never cohabit with his wife, but instead form a liaison with the wife of some other boy-kinsman. Among the Tamil Vallambans a boy is obliged to marry one or other type of cross-cousin, who may be older than himself. The girl then cohabits with her husband's elder brother, mother's brother or father, and the boy-husband legitimates the children when he comes of age. In all these customs we appear to have the reflection of a strong Oedipal conflict which, on the one hand, prevents a man from deflowering and sometimes from cohabiting at all with his wife and causes him to give her to his father or some other father-figure, and, on the other hand, gives such free rein to incestuous desires towards women of the filial generation as to permit men to deprive their social 'sons' of their legal wives. The defloration of a girl by one who is a father-figure is not, of course, confined to India, but appears for example in the European custom of the *deut du serenos*. At the initiation of a Banaro girl, her prospective bridegroom's father, being 'ashamed' to do it himself, engaged his sub-friend to deflower the girl (Thurnwald 1916, p. 261).

unless he has been admitted by certain formalities to the village to which he has⁶²¹ emigrated, is considered to belong to his original home.

The village is divided into two *Karas* (or *Amsams*), the northern *Kara* and the southern *Kara*. The division is arbitrary and has no significance. A man from Kavalam belonging to the North or South *Kara* is treated in another village as belonging to the same place.

The *Bhagavati* (goddess) Temple in the village was, before the government⁶²¹ took possession of it, owned by two *Karas* jointly.

In each of the *Karas* there are five *Āsāns* or *Pramanis*. They keep *Kalaris* and⁶²² are honoured and respected by all the *Nāyars* in the district. No common *Nāyar*⁶²² is allowed to sit in their presence, to enter their kitchen; or to call their women⁶²⁴ without the title of *Kunjamma* (or Ladyship).⁵⁷⁶

The seventy-five families which the *Kara* contains are divided between the five *Āsāns*. Each *Āsān*, therefore, has a general authority over all the families, and special rights over the fifteen families immediately under his control.

In all matters of ceremony the *Āsāns* have to be informed beforehand. Without⁶²² their presence, no public ceremony of any family is supposed to be valid. All the⁶²⁶ public functions of the village are done by them. The ceremonies of the temple, for example, are under their control. They are the people who summon the *Karakars*, or the villagers, to assemble and settle matters of importance. The villagers settle⁶²³ in such assemblies, things relating to the community, such as public festivals, the expenditure of *Karayagam* (common to the village) funds and the behaviour of people who have acted against the customs of the village. If a marriage ceremony⁶²² had not been properly conducted, it comes before them. If an *Āsān* had not been⁵⁸⁵ properly invited, that matter also comes up for consideration. Instances of punish-⁶²⁶ ments inflicted by the village on individuals and families were not uncommon till lately. I remember a particular case in which the villagers as a body led by their *Āsān* walked out of the marriage (*Talikettu*) *pandal* because the order of precedence was not kept up. The family of a squire had, during these hard days, become poor, and a rich squire who, in order of precedence, came below him was given a seat of honour. The result was that the whole community walked out as a protest, and the *Kalyanam* had to be held over again to the satisfaction of the poor *Āsān* and his loyal friends.

How strong this organisation is will be seen from the following incident. A²⁶⁴ gentleman, when coming from Madras, had a Christian friend with him, and his⁵⁶⁴ servant who waited for him at Alleppey was eating his food when both of them⁶²⁶ entered the boat. It is a very rigid custom that no food can be taken in the company, or even in the proximity of any lower caste, and Christians are considered to be such. The result of it was that when they got home the news got abroad that the *Nāyar* servant had eaten with a Christian in the boat, and the whole village

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cast off one husband and choose another, the religious rites of marriage had to be performed without any definite marital relationship with any particular man. This seems to be the explanation of *Talikettu Kalyanam*.

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The real marriage *de jure* and *de facto* is the *Sambandham*. "*Sambandham*" is a Sanskrit word, meaning good and close union. A Nayar girl can have *Sambandham* not only with a Nayar man, but with Brahmins and Kshatriyas. As a matter of fact the whole system of Nayar customs seems to have been regulated to suit the purpose of the Nampudiri Brahmins. It must be remembered that a very strict system of primogeniture is prevalent among the Nampudiris, and only the eldest male member in a Nampudiri family marries from among his own caste. Only in case the eldest has no issue, or is incapable of having any, is it that one of his brothers gets the chance to marry in his own community. Generally, therefore, the younger sons of a Nampudiri family marry among the Nayars. It must also be remembered [554] that it is considered an honour reserved only for the highest Nayar families to be allied to Nampudiri families by marriage.

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The *Sambandham* customs are of the simplest nature. If the suitor is a Brahmin he goes and tells the *Karnavan* of his desire to marry the girl. The *Karnavan* then consults the astrologer for an auspicious date, and informs the village elders. The Brahmin brings some *Pudakas* (i.e., clothes which the wife wears) and hands them over to the girl in the presence of her relations and the neighbours, and it is duly announced that they are married.

[582] If the suitor is a Nayar he is generally the girl's father's sister's son. As we have said before, this is considered to be the most proper marriage. In this case it must be remembered the head of the suitor's family approaches the girl's uncle with a proposal that such marriage is eminently desirable, and the *Karnavan* informs all the necessary people, and the *Pudaka* is given without much ceremony. It is when a stranger wants to marry in the family that all the formalities have to be gone through. Then all the village and all people in any way related are informed and, in the case of rich families, invited to a feast on the auspicious day. After an elaborate and sumptuous meal the village headman and family elders assemble in a hall. A lighted lamp is placed in the middle, and before it a plantain leaf with rice, betel-nut, lemons and spices. The bridegroom is ushered in here nearly half an hour before the ceremony, and he comes accompanied by some members of his family and the chief men of his village. There is a sort of social reunion for some time, and when the auspicious moment arrives, the bride, accompanied either by her mother (or, in some parts, by her mother's brother's wife) enters and approaches the bridegroom. In ordinary cases the bridegroom stands up and takes the clothes which some of his party had brought for him and gives them to the bride. In some cases the uncle of the bridegroom gives them to the mother of the girl.

The ceremony is now supposed to be over. The bride retires with her mother, and for some time a general conversation, including sometimes recitals of odes,

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vocal music, etc., goes on. One by one the guests soon depart, and the bridegroom stays in his wife's house for a few days. It must be remembered that the Nāyars are a strictly matrilocal community, though the custom shows a laxity in these days.

The *Sambandham* customs are not the same all over Malabar. They vary considerably in details, but the principle is the same all over. *Sambandham* in itself, though recognised as legal, has not the binding effect of a proper marriage. It is in theory dissoluble at will, and often it happens that, due either to misunderstanding or quarrel, either of the parties breaks off relations. In such a case, the marriage is deemed to have ended, and the aggrieved party can, without further formality, marry anybody else. The legal position is slightly altered in Travancore. By the Nāyar Regulation Act of 1912 it was enacted that if a man wants to break off his marriage relations with a woman to whom he was united by a properly conducted *Sambandham* he has to give her six months' notice and provide for the maintenance of her children by him (till they attain their twelfth year, unless the mother marries in the meantime). But this law has very little influence, and marriages and divorces go on in the same free fashion as before. In British Malabar, there is the Malabar Marriage Act of Sir C. Sankaran Nayar, the present Educational Member of the Imperial Government, by which a Nāyar entering into a *Sambandham* with a Nāyar woman can, if the parties choose to do so, register their union as a marriage to which ordinary marriage laws apply. This has been found very ineffective, for in the last twenty years during which it has been in force only six marriages have been registered, and all of them have been in the family of its distinguished author.

Before such laws came to be enacted (and to a very great extent even now) there has been singular freedom of marriage and divorce among the Nāyars. The men that a girl could possibly marry were strictly restricted by certain conditions. A Nāyar girl is not allowed to contract a marriage with men of a lower subcaste. She can marry either in her own subcaste or in castes above hers. She is not allowed to marry one who is not at least two years older than herself. She cannot marry anyone who shares pollution with her (that is descended from the same ancestress on the maternal side, however remote). There are cases when the common ancestress lived nearly four hundred years ago, but still her descendants are supposed to be so closely related in blood as to preclude matrimonial relationship of any sort.

The husband visits the wife's house after dinner, and this does not cause any particular inconvenience, as, till lately, marriage was restricted to people of one's own village or of its immediate neighbourhood. But in these days the tendency is strongly patrilocal, though ancient and aristocratic families still refuse to send their ladies out of the house. To keep within one's own house is considered to be a specially aristocratic privilege.

The question of polyandry among the Nāyars is a much debated point. This can be said with certainty: there has been no authenticated case of it at least for the last fifty years.

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and wives with others as a universal national custom; (c) the absence of "Sati."¹

In view of the fact that the Veddas are a strictly monogamous people, the prevalence of this custom in Ceylon can only be attributed to South Indian influence. Existing as it does in almost physical contiguity, it is indubitable that these customs and the Nāyar customs had the same origin. In fact, a Naga community was spread over the whole of South India, and the pressure of Aryan emigration seems gradually to have driven them behind the western Ghats in the case of the Nāyars and beyond the straits in the case of their kindred in Ceylon.

The Laws of Philology also support this view. I am assured by Don de Z. Wickrema Singhe that the change from "o" to "y" (as from Nāyar to Nayar) is very commonly met with in Dravidian and Prakritic languages. Apart from the general consonance of this change to the philological rules, Mr. Wickrema Singhe also pointed out to me that in Sinhalese² the Sanskrit word *Nāga* is written and pronounced as *Naya*.

The word *Nāyar*, therefore, is, without a shadow of doubt, the same as the word *Nāgar*, which means serpent-men.

Note 2.—The Nāyars and the Todas.

Dr. Rivers, in his learned and elaborate study of the social conditions of the Todas, makes some interesting comparisons with regard to their customs and some of the survivals in Nāyar social life. Before venturing to criticise some of his deductions I may be allowed to state that his idea of the emigration of the Todas to their present country from Malabar is probably right, though the evidence that he has adduced does not in any way prove it. The following facts which he has not noticed may give some additional weight to this hypothesis. Among the Nāyars the dairy (*Pal-pura*) is considered a thing to be kept ceremonially pure. No unclean person may approach it, and even the pollution of a child-birth is considered to be sufficiently strong to preclude those whom it affects from touching things belonging to the *Pal-pura*. It would be an exaggeration to say that the *Pal-pura* is considered sacred, but it is certainly purer than any other part of the house. Also the way in which the Todas convert milk into butter-milk is exactly the same as among the Nāyars. These customs with regard to the dairy are prevalent, not only where there is geographical contiguity between the Nāyar-land and the Toda-land, but also in Middle Travancore, which is at least two hundred and fifty miles from the land of the Todas.

Some, however, of the arguments brought forward by Dr. Rivers would not bear critical investigation. For example, he says³: "More important is the custom of

¹ *Ibid.*

² Cf. Wm. Greiger, *Sinhalese Etymology*.

³ Pp. 600-70.

114 giving a cloth as the essential marriage ceremony . . . Throughout the greater
585 part of the Malabar coast the essential feature of the marriage ceremony is that the
man gives a piece of cloth to the woman. The ceremony of the *Sambandham*
marriage (among the Nairs) consists in giving a cloth, and various names such as
Muntu Kodukkuka, *Vastadanum poduvakota*, and *Putamuri* all mean cloth-giving."¹

114 Now with regard to this "essential feature" of the Nāyar *Sambandham*, it may
585 be useful to remember that cloth-giving as a name for marriage did not exist in the
174 earlier half of the eighteenth century. The poet Kunchan Nampiyar, in his works
171 (thirty-two of which are directly or indirectly descriptive of Nāyar life) uses the word
"cloth-giving" for *Sambandham* only once:

"Penninu Putara Kotalthennallathumunnikkitten Potti paranju"
"Putrachaitan."

[195] This "essential feature," therefore, is most certainly a development of the
later half of the eighteenth century. It is, as a matter of fact, only within the last
fifty years that cloth-giving as a synonym for marriage has come to be used widely,
and even now it is used mostly by the ultra-refined, who consider it improper to utter
the name of marriage in company. Therefore, to say that the Todas emigrated from
the Malabar coast because of similarity in custom which, among the Nāyars at least,
is a very late development, does not carry conviction.

114 Again, Dr. Rivers sees a "possible link" between Malabar and the Todas in
192 the word *Pul-pulu*² of the Todas and the ceremony of *Puli Kudi* of the Nāyars.
171 Because of the similarity in these words, Dr. Rivers has suggested³ "the name
174 *Pulipal* may mean tamarind dairy and be a survival of community between the
Toda ceremony and that of Malabar." This is a supreme example of the danger of
drawing conclusions from questionable etymological premises. Now *Puli* is a
well-known Dravidian word which means both the tamarind tree and the sour taste.
It is also used as a verb, in which case it means to make anything sour. Now *pul-pali*
does not mean tamarind dairy, but the dairy of sour milk. How this could be a
link "between Malabar and the Todas" it is utterly impossible for me to see.

114 Dr. Rivers has enumerated a number of points in which he sees "a close
resemblance between the customs of the peoples of Malabar and the customs of the
Todas." But I would submit that all his points in which any similarity could be
seen are Dravidian customs belonging not only to the peoples of Malabar but to the
rest of the non-Aryan peoples of South India. Therefore the arguments Dr. Rivers
has brought forward prove only that the Todas are a Dravidian people. They do
not prove that there was any connection, other than that of neighbours, between the
Nāyars and the Todas.

¹ Except the last, which means cloth-cutting.

² Pp. 701-2.

³ P. 702.

[P. 22]

CHAPTER II.

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THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

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A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

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According to Nayar ideas the most desirable bride for a young man is the daughter of his maternal uncle.

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Marriage customs.

There are two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the *Thdlikettu kalyānam* (*tali* tying ceremony), and the *Sambandham* (the customary nuptial union of man and woman), the first of which is performed for every girl before puberty, and the second, the real adult marriage, is celebrated after she comes of age. The *tali* tying for every girl is compulsory before she arrives at maturity,¹ and the omission or neglect of it will place her and her family under a ban; for, it is considered a religious impurity for a girl to attain puberty before the performance of this ceremony. There is however a tendency for these restrictions to be overlooked now-a-days.

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In every *taravdd* or family, the ceremony is performed once in ten or twelve years, and all the girls down to the baby in the cradle, who have not already undergone this ceremony, are married in this fashion for the sake of economy. When, in a family, the *tali* tying ceremony has to be performed for a girl or a number of girls, the *kūranavan* or senior member thereof, at a meeting of the friends and relatives of the family, sends for the local astrologer, who after examining the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls determines the auspicious hour for it as well as for certain subsidiary rites

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1. As a rule, the *tali* tying ceremony is performed before the girl attains puberty, but sometimes it is performed afterwards. In the latter case, the girl is prohibited from entering temples during the period intervening between the attainment of puberty and the *tali* tying ceremony.

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kalyānam of the Nayars and the marriage ceremony among other Hindus. All available evidence unmistakably points to the conclusion that the former is, in intention, if not in effect, the actual marriage ceremony of the Hindus. The ceremonials in the two cases differ very little; there is, however, one exception, namely, that in the case of Brahmans and others, vedic *mantrams* are recited, while the Nayars are compelled to substitute Brahmani *pattu* (song), which should be uttered in the *Rig vēdic swaram*. Ever since the institution of this system of marriage in Kerala, these songs have been in existence, and they invoke the blessings of numerous children for the pair. It must also be noted that, among all Brahmans, the wedding ceremony is divided into two parts, namely, the first in which the ceremonials form the chief feature, known as betrothal, and the second, popularly known as consummation or the real marriage. In the case of Nayars and other *marumakkathayam* Hindus, the *tīli* tying ceremony for a girl, which is performed before the first sign of menstruation, refers to the betrothal, and the *sambandham* to the real marriage. There is this important difference that, while the Brahmans perform the ceremony after the selection of a husband and postpone the union of the couple to a future date, the *marumakkathayam* people perform the ceremony first and select the husband on the second occasion, *i. e.*, when the girl is fit to be united to her husband. Hence the bridegroom in the first ceremony acts the part of a vicarious husband. But when the husband is ready at hand, it is not unusual for the girl to be actually married on the occasion of *tīli* tying. The reason for this departure may have been due to the scarcity of suitable young men in the old troublous times and the consequent difficulty of securing a proper husband for every girl before puberty and the danger of girls being out-casted in default of it. Hence it is that the early legislators have devised this convenient plan to allow every girl to be married in a sense with the necessary religious ceremony, and enable her to remain unmarried for life without being subject to excommunication from caste. This view is supported by the fact, that the Nayars were, till towards the close of the eighteenth century, a fighting race and that there was a great loss of lives in the wars with neighbouring principalities and tribes. As in other matters the letter of the law has been closely followed, without a corresponding adherence to its spirit.

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881 she bathes with her friends. The same party return home in procession, when the *Brāhmani* entertains the party with her music. In the afternoon, the girl is seated in a pandal put up in front of the house, where the *Vélans* continue the songs, which are *Puranic*, and the assembled guests who are chiefly the women of the village as also those of their friends and relatives present the washerman, each with a piece of cloth. They are entertained at a sumptuous feast held that day; after which the assembled party break up, taking leave of the host. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house on the fourth day for the bath; whence she returns to her house in procession together with the beating of drum and joyous shouts. (84) In the northern parts of the State, the *Vélan's* songs are at night, and the performance of the ceremony is compulsory on the fourth day. In the southern Taluks it is often put off to a convenient day, before the completion of which, the girl is prohibited from entering into the kitchen or going to the temple for worship.

585 The second or real marriage is the *Sambandham* (the customary union of man and woman), which is the principal word denoting the conjugal relations among the Nayers. It is said that there are seven forms of this marriage prevailing in Malabar, of which only two or three are in vogue in the State. The customs connected with each of the latter differ in different places: 184 582 nevertheless the main features are the same all over. The best form of *Sambandham* among the Nayers is that between the daughter of a maternal uncle and his nephew; but, as a rule they enjoy very much greater freedom of choice than other classes of people. 584 The parents or friends of the bride or bridegroom make the proposal, and the wishes of the *kūranavans* of the two families are invariably consulted after the examination and agreement of their horoscopes. If the parties agree, an auspicious day is fixed in consultation with the astrologer. A few of the caste-men of the village and the friends of the bridegroom meet together in his house, and they all go in a sort of procession to the bride's house where they are properly welcomed and seated in a conspicuous part of the house. A portion of the *Rāmāyanam* or other sacred book, referring to marriage and the happy conjugal life attending it, is then read by the *Asān* or village school master. Some music is also provided for the entertainment of the assembled guests who

are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and at the auspicious hour the bridegroom and his party proceed to a conspicuous part of the house, where a seat is specially provided for him. On either side of the seat and a little in front of it, are placed two lighted lamps. There the bridegroom and the bride make obeisance to the *kāranavans* and other elderly men present there, distribute presents of money to the Brahmans who pronounce their benediction upon the conjugal pair. The bridegroom or his *kāranavans* in the northern parts of the State give her the wedding dress in which she is dressed. The bride is then ushered in, either by her mother or by an elderly member of the family when cloths are given to the bride by the bridegroom. In some places the bridegroom and his party chew betel leaf and nut, while they chat with the women. After a while, the party begins to break up, one by one, wishing the couple all happiness, and the women, departing one by one, leaving the couple alone, one of them closing the door from outside. About daybreak, next morning, the bridegroom departs from the house, leaving under the pillow a sum of money according to his means. The *sambandham* is now complete. The woman resides in her family, and her husband visits her there. A few days after this, the bridegroom's mother or some senior woman of his family sends some cloths including *pīvu mundus* (superior cloths) and *thōrtha mundus* (towels) and also some gingelly oil for her use during the next six months. Every six months, she does the same, and on the festivals of *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruvithira* she is given a little money, arecanut, betel, tobacco and banana. Before long the women of the bridegroom's family express their wish to see her, and have her brought to their family by a few women of the former. She stays there for a few days and is sent back to her own house with presents of ornaments and clothes from senior women of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

In the Chittur and Talapilly Taluks of the State as also in the Palghat Taluk of South Malabar, this form of marriage is called *Kidakkōra* or *Kidakka kalyānam* (the bed chamber ceremony). As part of this ceremony, a declaration is made by one of the bridegroom's party to the senior female of the bride's house in the presence of the assembled guests in the following terms:— " Let this youth visit this damsel for

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A NAIR GIRL FOR SAMBANDHAM (MARRIAGE) WITH HER
BRIDESMAIDS.

[facing p. 31]

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184 six months," and a reply is given in the terms "Be it so". Thus, the permission of the senior lady of the bride's family is asked and given to the bridegroom to visit the bride for a period of six months.

[586] The young men of some aristocratic families who wish to perform *sambandham* have the brides brought to them on an auspicious day without any formal ceremony, and henceforth look upon them as their wives.

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[586] The union is generally effected with the mutual consent, but is terminable at the will of either party. Practically, a marriage thus effected is, in the majority of instances, found as happy and enduring as others more formal and ceremonial.

[587] The following is the account given by the late Mr. Chandu Menon of the ceremonies constituting the marriage among the Nayars of Malabar. It is quoted here, because it is a typical description which covers all forms of the union :—

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192 "Sambandham is the principal Malayalam word as *vivāham* is in Sanskrit. Whatever may be the *sambandham* of the *marumakkathīyam* Nayars, there can be no doubt that the idea which the word conveys to a Malayali is the same as the word *vivāham*. The generic term, *sambandham*, which, in South Malabar between Calicut and Nedunganad, and in Ponnani, Cochin, and parts of Travancore, is the old name to denote marriage includes—

1. *Guna dōsham* as used in South and North Malabar.
2. *Pudamuri* or its Sanskrit synonym for *Vastradīnam* used in South Malabar.
3. *Uzhamporukkuka*, and *Vidīram Kairuga* of North Malabar.
4. The *Kidakkōra kalyānam* of Palghat and parts of Nedunganad.

Pudamuri, *Vastradīnam*, *Uzhamporukkuka*, *Vidīram Kairuga* are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would hardly be a Malayali who would not really understand what is meant by *sambandham thudanguka* (to begin *sambandham*). The meaning of this phrase which means "to marry" is understood throughout the Keralam in the same way, and there cannot be any ambiguity about it.

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184 It is thus found, that *sambandham* is the principal word denoting marriage among the *marumakkathīyam* Nayars. It

will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this *sambandham* ceremony all over Keralam, are, in the main, the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether the stars agree astrologically, the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony, the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place, the presentation of the *ddnam* (gifts) to the Brahmans, the sumptuous banquet, the meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are the features which will invariably be found in all well conducted *sambandhams* in all parts of Keralam alike. But here I would beg to state, that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all *sambandhams* among respectable Nayars, and I would further say, that they ought to be gone through at every *sambandham*, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of *sambandham*, with the particular incident attached to certain forms of *sambandham* in South Malabar. I shall describe the *Pudamuri* or *Vastraddnam* as celebrated in North Malabar, and show how the other forms of *sambandham* are related to it. I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every *Pudamuri* is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride in the presence of the relations of the bride and the bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down the results of his calculation on a piece of palmyra leaf with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's *kiranavan* and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth, and this preliminary ceremony is invariably performed

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184 at all *Pudamuri* in North Malabar. It is called *Pudamuri*
[787] *Kodukkal* (giving pieces of cloth for dressing), and it is unknown
in South Malabar.

Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the *Pudamuri*, the bridegroom visits his *kūrānā-cans* and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nut, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house of the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends, to seats [431] provided in the *tekkini* or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (*dīnams*) or money gifts to the Brahmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now the time for the [787] astrologer to appear and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *patinjattu* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated and turned into a bed room for the occasion. [354] There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps and *aṣṭamangalyam* which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangalyam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, lighted fire and a small round wooden box called a *cheppu* made in a peculiar fashion. They will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his best man enters the room through the western door accompanied by the bride's aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the *aṣṭamangalyam* and lits up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom are touched, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, as he has to [431] perform another duty. At the *tekkini* or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes and betel leaves and

nuts, which are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed room with the bride. 585
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[431]

This is an unvarnished account of a *Pudamuri*. Next morning *veetil kettu* or *salkaram* ceremony follows, and the relations of the bridegroom take the bride to the husband's house, where the bride's party are treated to a grand feast".

The *sambandham* or *Pudamuri* ceremony is not a marriage in the legal or sacramental sense of the term. The views of the members of the orthodox community in Malabar, who are the expounders of the existing customs, are of great ethnographic importance. It is said that the Nambuthiris consort with Nayar females by *sambandham*, and precisely the same ceremony is gone through whether the husband is a Nambuthiri or a Nayar. The Nambuthiris do not look upon it as a marriage. Where a Brahman is a bridegroom, he cannot eat with his Sudra wife, and is therefore unable to join with his wife in the wedding feast. There is no comparison of horoscopes. The aristocracy of the District of Malabar, the Rajas who are admittedly the heads of the Nayar caste, and the Nambuthiris who are the expounders of religion, opine, that chastity is not one of the duties prescribed for the Nayar community and *alokas* (verses) are quoted to prove this. This view is not held in the Cochin State. 585
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[P31]

In the Malabar Marriage Commission, one hundred and ninety-seven witnesses admitted the undoubted fact that either party to the union may terminate it at any time from wantonness, caprice or any other reason, and that if the couple joined together by *Pudamuri* were satisfied with one night of hymeneal bliss, there is no legal impediment to prevent their separating without any formality on the following morning. Ninety-one witnesses alleged some formality to be necessary, and that parties should not separate without the approval of their *kdranavans* or of their relatives or of their caste people. There was also a small minority (twenty-one witnesses) who denied to the women the right of divorce which they accorded to man, assigning as their reason, that, under the Hindu Law, no woman can be independent. This minority would deprive 586
[562]

586 36

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[85] *marumakkathdyam* of its one great merit, viz., that in sexual matters it places the man and the woman on terms of equality giving equal freedom to both. With practical unanimity, the witnesses admitted that the man may turn away the woman, and that under the *marumakkathdyam* law, he is in no way responsible for the maintenance of the children whom he has begotten upon her. Further, the person that begot a child in a *marumakkathdyam* female was originally regarded as a casual visitor and the sexual relation depended for his continuance on mutual consent.¹

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The views expressed above are those of the landed aristocracy, and the rulers who were admittedly of the Nayar caste, as also those of the somewhat selfish class of the Nambuthiris, of Malabar, who, to gratify their selfish ends, quote chapter and verse of their own creation in support of the existing custom and teachings, which the Nayars of these days will never submit to. All or nearly all of them cling to one wife for life, and with them *sambandham* is the real marriage, *de facto* and *de jure*. This is the real state of affairs in the States of Cochin and Travancore as well as in British Malabar.

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The present and growing tendency in all cases, in which, a man, whether a Nambuthiri or a Nayar, consorts with a Nayar woman, is to look upon her as the true wife, and the children of such unions are looked upon as theirs and duly provided for, so far as their means permit. The statement is to a certain extent confirmed by Mr. Logan, who was the Collector of Malabar for many years and thus had ample opportunities of knowing a great deal of Malabar and its people. He says, "this part of Malabar has, in the hands of unenquiring commentators, brought much undeserved obloquy on the morality of the people. The fact, at any rate, of recent years, is that, although the theory of the law sanctions freedom in these relations, conjugal fidelity is very general. Nowhere is the marriage tie, albeit, informal, more rigidly observed or respected, nowhere is it more jealously guarded or its neglect more savagely avenged. Their very looseness of the law makes the individual observances closer, for people have been watchful over the things they are most liable to lose. The absence of a ceremonial has encouraged the popular impression, but a ceremonial,

1. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 38 to 44.

like other conventionalities, is an accident, and the Nayar women are as chaste and faithful as their neighbours, just as they are as modest as their neighbours, although their national costume does not include some of the details required by conventional notions of modesty."¹ Nevertheless, the existing state of things in the community does not quite satisfy the sentiments of the educated public. There was a loud cry for reform and legislation in British Malabar. The Madras Government appointed a commission, which, after its protracted labours, enacted a permissive law, Act IV of 1896. The main provisions of the Bill are, that, when a *sambandham* has been registered, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father respectively and to succeed to half his self-acquired property if he dies intestate, while the parties to such a *sambandham* cannot register a second one during its continuance. The law does not extend to this State. The fewness of the number of marriage registrations shows how little the Nayars, as a community, have availed themselves of it. The principal objections urged against it are: (1) that it ignores caste and customary restrictions on marriage and thereby interferes with caste; (2) that it sanctions what according to social usage is deemed to be incestuous marriage; (3) that marriage before the Registrar is obnoxious to the people, and that no one has any scruples about going through the customary form; (4) that the provisions relating to divorce are ill-adapted to the present state of society in Malabar, and that revelations of conjugal infidelity in public courts are the most repulsive to the people; (5) that the provisions relating to the giving of the whole of the self-acquired property to wives and children amount to violent interference with the customary law. The following extract from Moore's Malabar Law and Customs is well worth the perusal²:—

From the date on which the Act in Malabar came into force up to 31st March 1910, one hundred *sambandhams* have been registered. "In his last report of the working of the Act, the Registrar-General states, that the number of notices of

1. Logan's Manual of Malabar, Vol. I, page 136.
2. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 23.

177 intentions to register *sambandhams* was thirty-six in 1896—97,
582 twenty-four in 1897—98 and only fourteen in 1898—99. " He
585 accounts for the falling off as follows:—

The mass of the people continues to regard the marriage law with aversion and suspicion, and even the educated members of the community who are in favour of the measure, shrink from taking advantage of it from fear of offending the elderly members of their *taravaddis*, and all the powerful Nambuthiris and other great landlords. The Registrar of Calicut also points out, that the power conferred by the marriage law, to make provision for one's own wife and children, has hitherto acted as some inducement to persons to register their *sambandhams*, but as Act V of 1898 (Madras) which came into force from 2nd September 1898, enables the followers of the *marumakkathayam* law to attain this object without registering their *sambandhams*, and "unnecessarily curtailing their liberty of action, and risking the chances of divorce proceedings," he thinks it unlikely that registration under the marriage law would increase in future.

595 Among the Nayars of ancient times in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, there was polyandry. In the report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, it is said, that there is evidence to show that it still lingers in Ponnani and Walluvanad Taluks, especially on the Cochin border of the former Taluk.¹ Apart from its existence in former times, it may be said that nowhere in these States is the custom still found to linger, no admitted instance of it has come to my notice in the course of my investigations into the customs and manners of the castes in the various parts of the State. An account of these customs as it existed in ancient times, and the theories that have been advanced in respect of it are of some ethnographical importance, and it may not be out of place here.

593 The Nayars of ancient times were, in most cases, neither regularly married, nor did they care much, when married, to support their wives and children; but their nephews (sons of sisters), who were their legitimate heirs, were properly looked after. Nayar women generally mated with Brahmans or Nayars, but never with people of lower caste under pain of

1. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 83.

the eye, buffaloes with white tips to their tails, wild elephants caught in traps and wild hogs that had fallen into wells.

Even in social matters, these chieftains had supreme powers. In the settlement of marriages in any part of the country, the Nayars had to obtain the chieftain's sanction who held sway over the particular locality. The custom is even now in vogue though in a visibly weakened form. In the celebration of a *Kettu kalyanam* or *sambandham* in any part of the country, the parties concerned visited the chieftain and bought his consent with presents. For without such consent no settlement and celebration thereafter could be arranged. His consent had to be procured even for the holding of festivals.

The chieftain's powers were so great that, if a wife living with her husband proved an object of attraction to another, adequate presents to the chieftain would buy him a formal writ, giving him the rights of a husband over that woman. Thus even so late as only a generation or two ago, the chieftain's power was exercised in the encouragement of polyandry.

When a tali-tying ceremony had to be performed for a girl of any decent family in a locality, she was taken to the local chieftain with a nuzzar or *tirumukdāzha* and other things prepared for the festival that was to follow. In return the girl was given a golden bracelet which she was authorised to wear in his presence. No girl who had not received such a one could wear it.

In certain parts of the State people were afraid to erect buildings of more than one storey, lest they should incur the inexorable wrath of the chieftain; nor were they allowed to tile thatched houses. Departures from these customs were allowed only with the consent of the chieftain, embodied in a writ issued by him. In rural parts even to this day such restrictions are not totally inoperative. In the State His Highness the Raja gives his sanction in regard to some social matters even to this day and Nambutiri landlords exercise a similar authority among the tenants occupying their lands. Certain kinds of conveyances such as palanquins and dholies were reserved only for chieftains while the *Pallichans* were the only people who were employed to carry them. Various titles

595 who do still live matrimonially in this way. From a certain Musad (low-
 515 caste Nambudri Brahmin practising surgery) whom I met in Shoranur
 557 and who was introduced to me as someone well informed because, owing to his profession, he had access where others could not go, I heard that in the very closed Court circles of Cochin and Travancore polyandry of the old type is still practised by Nayar ladies, who consort with wealthy Tamil Brahmins and Pillais from the east coast. It would naturally have been far beyond the bounds of possibility for me personally to investigate the truthfulness of this allegation, and therefore it can only be given here for what it is worth.

Thandans and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of north Cochin practise polyandry of the fraternal type, and none other. They are *makkathayam*, and a regular wedding ceremony is usual in their case. Cross-cousin marriage, in (582) which a woman marries her father's sister's son, her *machchunan* and all his brothers, is preferred if not compulsory. The ceremony is performed at the bride's house, after the preliminary exchange of bride-price and dowry have taken place between the two families involved, and consists of the girl and her bridegrooms being seated in a row and fed ritually on *kanji* (rice porridge) and coconut milk. The honeymoon of the newly wed also takes place at the home of the wife, her husbands going to her either each in turn or in a body. Later residence of the (591) family is patrilocal.

193 Most Thandans and Tiyas of central Kerala used to be toddy tappers,
 463 as I have mentioned earlier (p. 172). This occupation, they say, they
 595 brought from Ceylon, from where they are reputed to have originated; they also profess to have brought from there the coconut palm tree and the practice of fraternal polyandry. The tradition is closely linked to that of the Kammalans whom I shall describe next, and there does seem to be some evidence of close ties with the great island to the south. To (167) this day, many Thandans and Tiyas emigrate temporarily to Ceylon as labourers, and it is said, although the etymology may be fanciful as some authors insist, that Tiya is derived from *dvipa*, "island" in Sanskrit.

595 I found Thandan and Tiya polyandry quite active still in Walluvanad
 198 and in north Cochin. I had been led to believe that it was fast dying out and that only very few practised it any longer. But this was not my impression, especially in the taluk of south Malabar. In north Cochin, (656) a recent enactment known as Act XVII of 1115 The Cochin Makka-thayam Thiyya Act of 1940, had made polyandry illegal in future, and it is true that nine years after the coming into existence of the new legislation, only the older people still practised the ancient form of marriage.

Panju and Narayana had taken their share of the two fifths of the common *tarawad* property undivided, as I have explained earlier, and this gave them a relatively more prosperous household in which to live and bring up their children. They were landowners in their own right, and not tenants like most of the Thandans in the area. This enabled them to work in their paddy fields for themselves, and in those of their brothers of the bigger house, and saved them from paying rent or giving part of the crop away to the *janmi* as others had to do.

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Accompanied by my interpreters, I spent many hours in the courtyard of the Appayl Wattakkeh farmhouse, watching the work of the men, the domestic chores of the women, and the games of the children. I was obliged occasionally to question them and to press them for answers about situations which I did not have time to watch develop, although I would naturally have much preferred to remain simply a silent on-looker. By preference, I used to go them rather than get them to come to me, for I believed that if I saw them in their own setting, I got to know them better.

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It appeared that each time the men of Appayl Wattakkeh had been married (three times in the case of Panju and Narayana, to Devaki, Kuniyama and Nani), there had been the customary arrangement between the two families and a public wedding ceremony. Money had been given to the fathers of the bride by the boy's father and maternal uncle, and cloth to her mother. For Nani, their mother's brother had given her eldest father (she had three) twenty eight *fanans* (or sixteen rupees, fifteen annas), and a piece of cotton material to her mother. In exchange, she had brought with her a dowry which consisted of two hundred rupees worth of jewelry, household brass vessels and two gold sovereigns. This was quite exceptionally good for the Thandan caste, I was told.

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In all three marriages, the husbands had lined up with their common bride and drunk coconut milk with her, in the presence of the respective families and their guests. The ceremony had always taken place at the woman's house, and it was only after a few days that she had gone to live with her husbands. This period varied considerably, I heard; in some cases weeks and even months went by without the partners having any sort of marital relations. People were not in a hurry to consummate marriage in Kerala, it seemed.

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I had read in Aiyappan's *Iravas and Culture Change*, p. 101, that when one husband was with the common wife, it used to be the custom that he leave his knife etc. on the door frame of the bedroom to signal

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Because of the profound cultural changes which have fundamentally modified the social and economic structure of Kerala society, it can be said that polyandry is on the decline in that part of the world. Circumstances no longer favour the marriage of many men to one woman, and the custom is not only being abandoned as useless, but those who, by tradition, should follow it, look upon it with abhorrence and with growing disgust. To those who have practised it so long, as something good and moral, it has become, nowadays, something barbarous, primitive and unworthy of them: times have changed and it simply is not done any longer.

ADDENDUM

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Act XVII of 1115, the Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act, passed by His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin on the 18th day of Kumbham 1115, corresponding to the 1st day of March 1940.

C.V. Iyyu, former Member of the legislative Assembly of Cochin State, told me on the 27th of October, 1949, that he was on the Commission which in 1937-38 drafted the Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act of 1940. The majority of the members of the Commission were Tiyas (Thiyyas) and the initiative of the enactment was due to V. K. Krishnan Kutti, M.L.A., *wakil* of Trichur, himself a Tiya. The Act is thus a Tiya legislative reform and not a foreign one. This would explain the fact that it is observed. I hear that the idea is a result of the education and progress of the Tiya community, which now ranks as one of the most accomplished in Kerala.

Some of the main provisions of the Act are given here below. They are those that concern definition of the name Thiyya, of an heir's sex in doubtful cases, acceptable forms of the marriage solemnity, prohibition of polyandry (art. 12), succession both testamentary and intestate:

Chapter I. Five articles.

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Art. 5, (i): "Thiyya includes Ezhuva, Chova, Billava, Marayan, Thandan and others recognized as such." It adds: "When owing to any physical defect or deformity, it is not possible to ascertain the sex of any of the heirs of an intestate, such heirs shall, for the purpose of this Act, be regarded as female."

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Chapter II. Marriage and its Dissolution. Thirteen articles.

Art. 6: "Conjugal union may be openly solemnized in any of the following ways:

- a) by the tying of the Mangalya Sutram
- b) by the presentation of cloth to the female by the male
- c) by exchange of rings
- d) by mutual garlanding, and

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- e) by mutual consent evidenced by a registered instrument attested by not less than two witnesses."

Art. 12: "A polyandrous marriage performed after this Act shall be void."

Chapter III. Maintenance and Guardianship. Three articles.

Chapter IV. Succession.

Five articles on testamentary succession.

Art. 26: "For the purpose of succession there is no distinction between the self-acquired property and the ancestral property or between the property of a male and that of a female except as otherwise provided by this Act."

Eight articles on Intestate succession.

Art. 28: "Property in respect of which a Thiyya has died intestate devolves upon the wife or husband or upon those who are of the kindred of the deceased in this order and according to the rules herein prescribed."

Art. 29: "When the intestate had left more than one widow, the distribution of inheritance referred to in sections 30, 31, 32 and 33 shall be made as if there is only one widow, all the widows together taking equally one widow's share."

Art. 30. "When the intestate has left a widow, if he has also left a son, or lineal descendant of a son, a share equal to that of a son shall belong to the widow."

Eleven articles on distribution of intestate's property.

Art. 39, (b): "If some of them (lineal descendants) are his (the intestate) sons and others are his daughters, each daughter shall take a half of the share of a son if the intestate is a male, and if the intestate is a female all children shall take equally."

It should be remembered that this legislation is that of a former princely state which has ceased to exist as a separate unit. Today, since the coming into being of the State of Kerala, made up of Malabar, Mahe, Cochin and Travancore, this Act has been superseded by the provisions of the India Code in force now in the whole of the Indian Republic. In accordance with the stipulations of the Code, a larger share of inheritance is granted to daughters and widow than was formerly allowed by the Cochin *Makkathayam* Thiyya Act.

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NAYAR

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- 595 realised, the women among the Nāyars not being
 [585] restricted to family or number, but, after she has been consecrated by the usual rites before the nuptial fire, in which ceremony any indifferent person may officiate as the representative of her husband, being in her intercourse with the other sex only restrained by her inclinations; provided that the male with whom she associates be of an equal or superior tribe. But it must be stated, for the glory of the female character, that, notwithstanding the latitude thus given to the Nāyattis, and that they are thus left to the guidance of their own free will and the play of their own fancy (which in other countries has not always been found the most efficient check on the conduct of either sex), it rarely happens that they cohabit with more than one person at the same
 586 time. Whenever the existing connexion is broken, whether from incompatibility of temper, disgust, caprice, or any of the thousand vexations by which from the frailty of nature domestic happiness is liable to be disturbed, the woman seeks another lover, the man
 587 another mistress. But it mostly happens that the bond of paternity is here, as elsewhere, too strong to be shaken off, and that the uninfluenced and uninterested union of love, when formed in youth, continues even in the decline of age."

- 595 In a note on the Nāyars in the sixteenth century,
 [20] Cæsar Fredericke writes as follows.* "These Nairi having their wives common amongst themselves, and when any of them goe into the house of any of these women, he leaveth his sworde and target at the door, and the time that he is there, there dare not be any so

* The Voyage and Travell of M. Cæsar Fredericke, Merchant of Venice, into the East Indies and beyond the Indies (1563). Translation. Hakluyt Voyages, V, 394.

NĀYAR

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178 The opinion was expressed by Mr. (now Sir Henry)
 174 Winterbotham, one of the Malabar Marriage Commis-
 • 585 sioners, that the Brahman tāli-tier was a relic of the time
 588 when the Nambūtiris were entitled to the first fruits,
 and it was considered the high privilege of every Nāyar
 maid to be introduced by them to womanhood. In this
 connection, reference may be made to Hamilton's 'New
 Account of the East Indies', where it is stated that
 [793] "when the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with
 his bride till the Nambūdri, or chief priest, has enjoyed
 her, and he, if he pleases, may have three nights of her
 company, because the first fruits of her nuptials must be
 an holy oblation to the god she worships. And some of
 the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the clergy the
 same tribute, but the common people cannot have that
 compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the
 priests' places themselves."

588 Of those who gave evidence before the Malabar
 Commission, some thought the tāli-kettu was a marriage,
 some not. Others called it a mock marriage, a formal
 marriage, a sham marriage, a fictitious marriage, a
 marriage sacrament, the preliminary part of marriage, a
 meaningless ceremony, an empty form, a ridiculous farce,
 an incongruous custom, a waste of money, and a device for
 becoming involved in debt. "While," the report states,
 "a small minority of strict conservatives still maintain
 that the tāli-kettu is a real marriage intended to confer
 on the bridegroom a right to cohabit with the bride, an
 immense majority describe it as a fictitious marriage, the
 origin of which they are at a loss to explain. And
 another large section tender the explanation accepted by
 our President (Sir T. Muttusami Aiyar) that, in some way
 or other, it is an essential caste observance preliminary
 to the forming of sexual relations."

NĀYAR

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178 Nāyars by divine law to administer to the lust of the

174 Nambūdris were disseminated abroad. The better

• [585] classes among the Nāyars revolted against the degrad-

[613] ing custom thus established, and a custom sprang up,

especially in North Malabar, of making sambandham a

more or less formal contract, approved and sanctioned

by the karnavan (senior male) of the tarwad to which

the lady belonged, and celebrated with elaborate

585 ceremony under the pudamuri form. That there was

[174] nothing analogous to the pudamuri prevalent in Malabar

from A.D. 1550 to 1800 may, I think, be fairly presumed

from the absence of all allusion to it in the works of

the various European writers." According to Act IV,

Madras, 1896, sambandham means an alliance between

a man and a woman, by reason of which they in accord-

ance with the custom of the community to which they

belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to

cohabit as husband and wife.

Of sambandham the following account was given by

Mr. Chandu Menon to the Malabar Marriage Com-

mission. "The variations of the sambandham are the

pudamuri, vastradānam, uzhamporukkuka, vitāram kaya-

ruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood

beyond the localities in which they are used, but there

would be hardly a Malaiyāli who would not readily

understand what is meant by sambandham tudanguga (to

begin sambandham). The meaning of this phrase, which

means to 'marry,' is understood throughout Kēraḷam in

the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake

about it. It is thus found that sambandham is the prin-

cipal word denoting marriage among marumakkatāyam

[192] Nāyars. [Sambandhakāran is now the common term for

[184] husband.] It will also be found, on a close and careful

examination of facts, that the principal features of this

sambandham ceremony all over Kēralam are in the main ⁵⁸⁵ the same. As there are different local names denoting ¹⁸⁴ marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examina- ^[787] tion, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically; the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony; the usual hour at which the ceremony takes place; the presentation ^[431] of dānam (gifts) to Brāhmans; sumptuous banquet; the ^[574] meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted sambandhams in all parts of Kēralam alike. But here I would state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all sambandhams among respectable Nāyars; and I would further state that they ought to be gone through at every sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the pudamuri or vastradānam as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of sambandham, I consider the pudamuri the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The prelimi- ^[787] nary ceremony in every pudamuri is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down

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 184 the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf,
 [787] with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match,
 and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the
 horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the
 [212] celebration of the marriage. This date is also written
 down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is
 handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other
 [791] to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the
 [574] bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house,
 and the former also receives presents in the shape of
 [431] money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which
 is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North
 Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown
 in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to
 the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the
 bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste,
 [584] to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on
 such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts,
 and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On
 the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset
 to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of
 his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at
 the gate of the house by the bride's party, and con-
 ducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkin
 [431] or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom
 [574] distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the
 Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is
 treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the
 astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour
 fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues.
 The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the
 padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bride-
 groom's party has, of course, brought with them a
 quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

The cloths are placed in the western room of the house (padinhatta), in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and ashtamangalyam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of mangalyam or marriage. These are rice, paddy (unhusked rice), the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round box called cheppu. These will be found placed on the floor of the room as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groomsman enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloths and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east, with the ashtamangalyam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groomsman then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride sprinkles rice over the lamps and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom, who immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. Next morning, the vettalakettu or salkāram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is feasting in honour of the occasion. Uzhamporukkuka or vidāram kayaral is a peculiar form

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184 of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the description given above that the pudamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people resort to the less costly ceremony of uzhamporukkuka or vidāram kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as pudamuri, but it is celebrated on a smaller scale.

[574] There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The feasting is confined to the relations of the couple. The particular incident of this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular pudamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by the uzhamporukkuka ceremony, and with grown-up children as the issue of such marriage, undergo the pudamuri ceremony some fifteen or twenty years after uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally. The sambandham of South Malabar, and the kidakkora kalyānam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of pudamuri, except the presenting of cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also salkāram ceremony wanting in South Malabar, as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

585 In connection with the following note by Mr. C. P. Rāman Menon on sambandham among the Akattu Charna or Akathithaparisha (inside clan), Mr. Fawcett

[582] states that "my informant says in the first place that the man should not enter into sambandham with a woman [178] until he is thirty. Now-a-days, when change is running [181] wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar,

[582] which is much more conservative than the south, it was,

however, my experience that sambandham was rare ⁵⁸⁵ on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The ^[181] Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women ^[582] of his household choose the bride, and communicate their ^[584] choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are ^[787] informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have sambandham with (naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony. The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, ⁵⁸⁵ and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same ⁵⁷⁴ age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel ^[431] leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the ^[613] taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again ^[276]

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- 585 served with food, after which they are conducted to a
 574 room, where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on
 [276] brass or silver plates called thālam. The chewing over,
 sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal
 chamber, where the women of the house and others are
 assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness,
 585 hides herself behind the others. Here again the bride-
 groom and his party go through more chewing, while they
 chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw,
 wishing the couple all happiness, and then the women,
 departing one by one, leave the couple alone, one of
 [43] them shutting the door from the outside. The Pattar
 Brāhmans always collect on these occasions, and receive
 small presents (dakshina) of two to four annas each, with
 betel leaves and areca nuts from the bridegroom, and
 sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited receive
 their dakshina in the bridal chamber, the others outside.
 [513] Those of the bridegroom's party who live far away are
 given sleeping accommodation at the bride's house [in a
 Nayar house the sleeping rooms of the men and women
 are at different ends of the house]. About daybreak
 next morning the bridegroom leaves the house with his
 party, leaving under his pillow 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees,
 according to his means, which are intended to cover
 the expenses of the wife's household in connection
 with the ceremony. The sambandham is now complete.
 [591] The girl remains in her own taravad house, and her
 [613] husband visits her there, coming in the evening and
 leaving next morning. A few days after the com-
 [431] pletion of the ceremony, the senior woman of the
 [796] bridegroom's house sends some cloths, including pavu
 mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu mundu (towels),
 and some oil to the bride for her use for six months.
 Every six months she does the same, and, at the Ōnam,

Vishu, and Thiruvathira festivals, she sends besides a little money, areca nuts, betel and tobacco. The money sent should be 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees. Higher sums are very rarely sent. Before long, the women of the husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of the girl, or, as they call her, Ammāyi (uncle's wife). They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with them. As she is about to enter the gate-house of her husband's taravad, the stile of which she crosses right leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a burning lamp and a brass plate (thālam), and precede her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a mat, and a burning lamp, a nazhi (measure) of rice, and some plantains are placed before her. One of the younger women takes up a plantain, and puts a piece of it in the Ammāyi's mouth; a little ceremony called madhuram tital, or giving the sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for a few days, and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, which are gifts of the senior woman of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. In a big taravad where there are many women, the Ammāyi does not, as a rule, get much sympathy and good-will in the household, and, if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes, though very rarely the case in South Malabar, and to be the wife of the Karanavan, it is observed that she gets more than her share of whatever good things may be going. Hence the proverb, 'Place Ammāyi Amma on a stone, and grind her with another stone.' A sambandham ceremony at

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A sambandham ceremony at

- 585 Calicut is recorded by Mr. Fawcett, at which there were
 [574] cake and wine for the guests, and a ring for the bride.

[184] In connection with sambandham, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes from Travancore that "it is known in different localities as gunadosham (union through good or evil), vastradānam or putavakota (giving of cloth), and uzhamporukkal (waiting one's turn). It may be performed without any formal ceremony whatever, and is actually a private transaction confidentially gone through in some families. The bridegroom and his friends assemble at the house of the bride on the appointed night, and, before the assembled guests, the bridegroom presents the bride with a few unbleached cloths. Custom enjoins that four pieces of cloth should be presented, and the occasion is availed of to present cloths to the relatives and servants of the bride also. The girl asks permission of her mother and maternal
 [431] uncle, before she receives the cloths. After supper, and the distribution of pān-supāri, the party disperses. Another day is fixed for the consummation ceremony.
 [574] On that day the bridegroom, accompanied by a few friends, goes to the bride's house with betel leaves and nuts. After a feast, the friends retire."

It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that one name for the sambandham rite is kitakkora, meaning
 881 bed-chamber ceremony. In the same report, the following account of a puberty ceremony is given. "The tirandukuli ceremony is practically a public declaration that a girl has reached the age of maturity. When a girl attains puberty, she is seated in a separate room, where a lamp is lit, and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular plate of brass called vālkannādi, literally a looking-glass with a handle. The event is proclaimed by korava

(shouts of joy by females). The females of the neighbouring houses, and of the families of friends and relatives, visit her. New cloths are presented to the girl by her near relatives. On the third day the villagers, friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding. Early in the morning on the fourth day, the Mannans or Vêlans appear. The girl is anointed with oil, and tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied round the head and waist. In the company of maidens [533] she is brought out of the room, and the Vêlans sing certain songs. Thence the party move on to the tank, where the girl wears a cloth washed by a Vêlan, and takes a bath. After the bath the Vêlans again sing [533] songs. In the afternoon, the girl is taken out by [574] the females invited for the occasion to an ornamental [431] pandal, and the Vêlans, standing at a distance, once more sing. With the usual distribution of pân-supâri, sandal and jasmine flowers, the ceremony closes. In the midst of the song, the female guests of the village, the wives of friends and relatives, and most of the members of the family itself, present each a small cloth to the Vêlans. They are also given a small amount of money, rice, betel leaf, etc. The guests are then entertained at a feast. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house for the bath on the fourth day, whence she returns to her house in procession, accompanied by tom-toms and shouting. In the northern tâluks, the Vêlan's song [533] is in the night, and the performance of the ceremony [184] on the fourth day is compulsory. In the southern tâluks, it is often put off to some convenient day. Before the completion of this song ceremony, the girl is prohibited from going out of the house or entering temples."

It is provided, by the Malabar Marriage Act, 1896, that, 575
 "when a sambandham has been registered in the manner 217

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• 585 therein laid down, it shall have the incidence of a legal
 217 marriage ; that is to say, the wife and children shall
 656 be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father,
 respectively, and to succeed to half his self-acquired
 [586] property, if he dies intestate ; while the parties to such
 a sambandham cannot register a second sambandham
 during its continuance, that is, until it is terminated by
 death or by a formal application for divorce in the Civil
 585 Courts. The total number of sambandhams registered
 182 under the Act has, however, been infinitesimal, and the
 656 reason for this is, admittedly, the reluctance of the
 men to fetter their liberty to terminate sambandham at
 will by such restrictions as the necessity for formal
 divorce, or to undertake the burdensome responsibility
 of a legal obligation to maintain their wife and offspring.
 If, as the evidence recorded by the Malabar Marriage
 Commission tended to show, 'a marriage law in North
 Malabar, and throughout the greater part of South
 Malabar, would merely legalise what is the prevailing
 custom,' it is hard to see why there has been such a
 disinclination to lend to that custom the dignity of legal
 sanction." * The following applications to register
 sambandhams under the Act were received from 1897 to
 1904 :—

—	Nāyars.	Tiyans.	Others.	Total.
1897	28	6	2	36
1898	8	3	4	14
1899	8	2	4	14
1900	8	..	9	17
1901	3	...	1	4
1902	...	...	...	...
1903	2	...	...	2
Total ...	57	10	20	87

In a recent account of a Nāyar wedding in high life⁵⁸⁵ in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, ¹⁷⁷ attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European, Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent. The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom.

The following note on Nāyar pregnancy ceremonies⁸⁴³ was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nāyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh^[264] month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes, and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by the temple priest, or by Nambūtiris. This is generally done till delivery. Another, and even more important ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer.^[787] The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of the taravād. At the appointed hour or muhūrtam, the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (vatakini or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence^[604] on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and, plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to⁸⁴³ the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is neces-⁵⁹³ sary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his

426 money-lenders is absorbed in no time. In the last five years the number of money-lending shops has doubled and their funds invested by this means have trebled. There is yet a demand for money which is unsatisfied.

Another method of supporting, as it were, the poor, is to lend the seed for sowing on the promise that for every 100 measures lent they will return after the first crop, i.e., after four months from the time of lending, 120 or 130 measures. This means an interest of 60 per cent per annum. The cultivators do not as a rule save their own seed, because when they have no means of living they naturally use their seed for food. I am told this is the case with every paddy cultivator excepting the three rich agriculturists who are landowners. It must be confessed here that without such borrowing the cultivation itself could not at present be carried on.

The village is free from padials. The debtors only pay interest, but in the Palghat taluk the system of padials survives.

• [585] The causes of indebtedness are not far to seek. Economic backwardness is the primary cause. Waste of money on drink and evil habits is not uncommon. In some cases debt is due to ambitious schemes which fail. Excessive display in marriage is not common in Malabar as in eastern districts. Non-Brahmans, especially the castes below the Nayars, pay only Rs. 20 or Rs. 30, according to their means, to the bridegroom, and sometimes not even that. Another Rs. 25 will raise a marriage above the ordinary level. Taking into account that a marriage will be performed in a family only once in five or six years this expenditure of Rs. 50 or so cannot be deemed great.

[427] The ordinary labourers, who number about 500, maintain themselves by their daily work and they are never in debt. It is the agricultural classes and those who are engaged in petty trade that are in debt. The only asset of the tenants is that they have to pay as advance one year's rent to the landowners and they receive for the advance 6 per cent interest. Even this is paid in some cases by borrowing.

There is no co-operative credit society in the village.

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794 *Communal life.*—The Brahman of this village have formed themselves into a society for mutual aid and convenience. This organization of the society is on the model of the old village republics. It exists for social purposes only. Two persons are elected biennially to look after the affairs and the income of the society. Every house is represented by its head in the village assembly and that assembly elects the persons. The sources of income to the society are—

(1) the interest on the already existing property which is about Rs. 3,000;

(2) for all social functions such as marriage, etc., the society as a whole has a claim for a fixed sum. The total income from these two sources may be estimated at Rs. 350.

The duty of the society is to appoint the village priest, village barber, village trumpeter and other persons essential for the performance of social or religious functions.

The whole income is spent on the worship of God. The particular ways in which it should be spent have been fixed long ago, and comprise a special feast for the Brahman once a year, provision of a burial-ground and other public and necessary places

582 *Marriage customs.*—The custom of marriage before puberty is
837 prevalent among Hindus, excepting Nambudris and Nayars. The Nambudris or Malabar Brahmans can give their daughters in marriage at any time they like or not marry them at all. Only the eldest male member of a Nambudri family can marry in his own caste. All the other sons keep Nayar women as mistresses. The eldest member can marry more than one wife, but many women of necessity have to remain unmarried.

[428] The case of Nayars is entirely different. They follow a
[586] different system of inheritance, i.e., descent through the female. The result of this system is that the female is at full liberty to choose or to divorce husbands as she likes. The man also has the same liberty. As a consequence of the different systems of inheritance their marriage custom is also different. Before puberty some person closely connected with the family ties the sacred string round the neck of the girl. This custom is purely formal and does not make them husband and wife. Nowadays this formal business is done by the mother of the girl at the temple in the presence of God. After puberty the man who really wants to marry the girl (he must be of the same caste or some one belonging to a higher caste, preferably a Nambudri) comes, and performs the real marriage. This real marriage is binding only so long as he and she will. Divorce can be had at any time by a mere word. The woman can marry again. The death of the man does not make [585] the woman a widow. There is no widowhood for Nayar woman. In fact there is no marriage among the Nayars. What actually happens is that somebody comes and lives with a woman for a time, then leaves, and both live with others. The only restriction is that two men cannot live with one woman at the same time, but one man can cohabit with any number of women at the same time. The children [428] born of such unions inherit the property of the uncle since the descent is by the female line. Nowadays there is a strong opinion against this system and the descent from father to son is advocated by the educated few, and the proposed regulations in Cochin are attempts to make marriage binding and permanent and dissoluble only under certain circumstances, widows being still allowed to remarry.

With regard to all other Hindus, marriage before puberty pre- [587] vails. But among the lower classes widow-marriage is allowable. money for a bridegroom is not demanded, and even polyandry is [595] prevalent among certain sections of the Tiyyas. But only brothers can share a wife. A brother can marry his widowed sister-in-law. Divorce is allowed in cases of serious infidelity but divorced men and women can marry again.

562 *The purdah system* is followed by the Nambudri women alone in Malabar. They cannot see men. Whenever they come out they hold a big native kind of umbrella to hide their faces and come to the temple, etc. The ideas about the purdah system among them are changing nowadays and the abandonment of the system is hoped for in a few years. The Nambudris are also advocating changes in their marriage customs.

428 The property of a Nambudri or Nayar family cannot be divided among the family sons. The eldest has the right to manage the property and enjoy the profits. The other members of the family have a right for maintenance only. When the eldest dies the next to him in age comes to the position. In the case of a Nambudri

There is no infant marriage except perhaps among the Brahmans. 582
Our girls are given away in marriage between the age of 10 and 12. Formerly it used to be younger. But strictly speaking this is only betrothal, the actual consummation of the marriage taking place only after the girl has attained womanhood at about 16 years of age. Our girls are very healthy and well developed so long as they remain at home. But their husbands take them away with them when they are old enough to the places where they are employed, e.g., there are three of them in Madras, and others nearer home. Boys are seldom married before 20 or 21 and the age is rising. Having to live away from home for their education their health is often impaired and they are less healthy and have less vitality and power of resistance than the girls, and are, in the writer's opinion, more subject to illness when away from home. Brahmans have to pay large dowries; whether they are able or no: the least sum being Rs. 1,000 for a bridegroom whose educational qualifications are measured by the Matriculation examination. Even 'ne'er-do-weels' get a high dowry owing to the unsatisfied demand for bridegrooms. We are groaning under the tyranny of an effete social system which is ruining us. Yet our elders protest against any change in our social system, such as post-puberty marriage. Something is sure to be done to remedy this state of things before long: the social conscience cannot long stand it.

Among other castes there is no infant-marriage, nor the system of dowries as it exists with us.

Among the Nayars there is a curious marriage ceremony 585
performed when a female child is only a few days or months old. Some male person, not necessarily or ordinarily the future husband, ties the sacred marriage thread around the baby's neck. This ceremony is purely formal. Real marriages take place after puberty, and the girl may choose any man she pleases as her husband, this marriage being not at all formal, and great freedom, comparatively, is allowed to the wife. Polyandry, which once prevailed, has now disappeared. [595]

The purdah system does not exist except among the Nambudri 582
community of Brahmans. There are two families of Nambudri Brahmans in our village. Their females can never see the faces of any males except their husbands and near relations. They seldom go out to any distance, except to the temple, never travel by railway, and hide themselves, when going about, with huge umbrellas made of palm leaves and bamboo sticks. There is post-puberty marriage among them, and only the eldest son of the family marries. Marriages are often exchanges of bride and bridegroom (i.e., a brother and sister marry the sister and the brother of another family), and in that case dowries need not be paid. Otherwise heavy sums are paid. The Numbudri Brahmans are noted for their simple lives, their Vedic learning, and their intense conservatism, though one very enlightened and aristocratic family near my village owns a tile factory at Shoranur and a large part of a spinning mill at Calicut. They lack western education. 556
This year one Nambudripad (i.e., a member of the Nambudri aristocracy) has joined the Presidency College in Madras as an extraordinary student, to get the benefit of the lectures and the college life. He belongs to the family mentioned above, who also

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The organization of kinship among the Tiyyar is so similar to the Nayar castes that an extended discussion is unnecessary. Gough observes a difference of degree in the question of the locality of marriage: whereas Nayar men may return to the lands of their MB and marry there, the Tiyyar tend to be grouped together in patrilocal clusters, except that there are some among them who also return to live with their MB (1961, p. 409). These slight differences are unlikely to be of great significance, for the reader should recall that many of these marriages take place in the same village or area, that in this region houses and huts are easy to build and that Nayar men tend to build houses for their wives and children as well.

In Gough's writings the similarity of the kin structure between the Tiyyar and the Sinhalese is particularly evident. The claims of the cross-cousins upon each other, the categorical Dravidian terminology, the nature of the marriage tie, and the various details of custom clearly indicate that we are dealing with the same cultural idiom.

The claims of the MB and FZ are manifested in *rites de passage*. In the *tali* ceremony (which is the well-known prepuberty rite in this area) both these persons appear, and the FZ (or MB wife) ties the *tali* as a "potential mother-in-law" (Gough, 1955a, p. 58).

The role of the cross-cousins is perhaps more revealing. "The cross-cousin's claim to become a girl's husband . . . must be met at the . . . marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack . . . He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee and the couple then pass unmolested" (Gough, 1955a, p. 59).⁸ This symbolic statement is identical to the Sinhalese, where the cross-cousin stops the bridal couple at the gate and demands his rights. He is given one hundred betel leaves and the couple moves on.

The Tiyyar of Cochin

It is intriguing to study the kin structure of the Tiyyar caste South Malabar and Cochin—the same term as in North Malabar—which

⁸ There is an interesting contradiction in Gough's material: though she writes of the similarity of the Nayar and the Tiyyar, she notes that with the Tiyyar the MBS (i.e., FZD) is the correct marriage partner (1955a, p. 57), whereas with the Nayar the FZS (i.e., MBD) is considered the rightful claimant (1961, p. 398). In view of Dumont's discussion, it would be interesting to know whether significant preferences are involved. Gough does not pursue the matter, but given the contradictions involved in patrilineal cross-cousin marriage (e.g., it cannot be combined with hypergamy rules) it is likely that Gough is merely using a shorthand formula for symmetrical cross-cousin marriage.

564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
 611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general struc-
 [591] tures as elsewhere.

613 We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
 like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
 be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
 worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
 595 patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
 [591] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
 [171] permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
 • 585 to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
 171 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
 the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
 various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
 [428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary rela-
 [586] tions between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
 her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
 [765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
 [183] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pol-
 lution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
 588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
 [613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
 [605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-
 cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain
 pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
 and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
 of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
 605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
 114 in the North (1955a, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
 actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
 informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
 conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categori-
 cal cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
 576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
 those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
 602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
 various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
 terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong